

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Etsuo Sayama

Etsuo Sayama was born in Nu‘uanu on July 25, 1915 to Shosuke and Etsuyo Sayama, emigrants from Yamaguchi prefecture, Japan. After his father, a barber, died of influenza in 1922, Etsuo Sayama's mother and her three children returned to Japan.

With the 1924 Asian exclusion act about to take effect, Sayama's mother brought him back to Hawai'i in 1923. His sister, who died the following year, and younger brother remained in Japan. In 1929 Sayama's mother married Matsuki Tamura.

Except for first grade in Japan, Etsuo Sayama's formal education took place in Hawai'i at Kauluwela, Kawānanakoa and Central Intermediate schools, McKinley High School, and the University of Hawai'i (UH). He attended UH on a scholarship and majored in sugar technology, graduating in 1937.

After graduation, Sayama got a job as an assistant agriculturalist at Waialua Agricultural Company. He left plantation work to enter federal civil service in 1938 as an engineers aide for the U.S. Army Air Corps Quartermaster Department at Hickam Field.

On December 7, 1941, Sayama heard a U.S. anti-aircraft shell explode when it fell on the Cherry Blossom restaurant, killing twelve people. With the start of World War II, the U.S. Engineer Department (later known as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) established the headquarters of the Honolulu Engineer District and the Hawaiian Constructors, a subcontractor, at Punahou School. Sayama worked there as a draftsman for the U.S. Engineer Department throughout the war. Most of Sayama's postwar work involved engineering jobs with the federal government, including two tours of duty in Japan.

Sayama married Yaeko Iwamoto in 1942. He has four daughters and a son. Sayama officially retired in 1973 but continued to work in Japan until 1975. He was widowed that same year. His lifelong hobby is collecting and producing covers—stamped envelopes featuring commemorative designs, or cachets, and significant cancellation dates.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Etsuo Sayama (ES)

February 3, 1992

Kapālama Heights, O'ahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Etsuo Sayama on February 3, 1992, at his home in Kapālama, O'ahu. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay, why don't we begin. Mr. Sayama, why don't we start by having you tell me when you were born and where you were born.

ES: I was born in Honolulu, July 25, 1915, on 1220 Nu'uanu Avenue.

WN: Okay. Tell me what your parents were doing over there.

ES: Oh, my father [Shosuke Sayama] was a barber, and my mother [Etsuyo Muraoka Sayama] was a housewife at home, because three children, yeah.

WN: Mm hmm.

ES: That's the extent that I know about him because he died [in 1922] when I was so young. And of course, my mother, when she cared for me, did all kind of work. But this is subsequent to coming back from Japan. She worked as a housemaid and then she also worked at the—there was a tailor on Beretania Street, Fujii, you know, and she worked there as a—I guess the olden days, all Japanese they learn *saiho*, which is seamstress, that kind of stuff, so she worked there. And then, she was pretty good cook, so she used to work at *okazuya*, you know, catering service like that. So she had a hard time too, doing all kind until she remarried.

WN: Your father's barbershop, do you remember it at all?

ES: No, I don't. Of course he died when I was six, so I should know something, but hard to recall. I don't even recall his face. Last weekend I went to my box out here. You know, I move so often, all my stuff is boxed. So I took out [his photo] just to see, get a perspective of the history. So, my only image of him is the picture. You know, I have it here if you want to take a look at my mother, and then I mounted our passport picture when we went back to Japan [in 1922], you know, right in the same page.

WN: You happen to know why your parents—how and why your parents came here?

ES: Oh, I have no idea. No idea. And I don't know how they even met. I guess matchmaking, yeah. They must have been matched. If my mother's cousin (Mrs. Hatsuyo Hashimoto) was living, I could have asked her. But when I tried to ask her, she was deteriorating already. (She was) the cook at the Robinson's family, you know. She's just like another mother to me, see. And her daughter was also with us. And (Mrs. Hashimoto) lost her husband too. But she didn't remarry and the two girls [were] with her. So three of us [were], just like fatherless three kids, you know. So we got really close together. (Previously) they lived in Japan (much longer), they knew more about it than I did. See, my Japan experience as a child was just one year. So . . .

WN: So you went there because your father had passed away when you were six years old.

ES: Yeah, right.

WN: Now, I understand he passed away during the flu epidemic?

ES: Yeah, that epidemic from World War I went around the world. So I guess by the time it reached Hawai'i, we were in '22, 'cause World War I was, what, 1917, '18, those years. So that's what (Mrs. Hashimoto) told me. Not only him, see, lot of people (died), you know. So must have been sort of an epidemic. [Shosuke Sayama died in 1922.] Not in Hawai'i, maybe, but it started off as an epidemic and it just spread, I guess. [An influenza epidemic killed an estimated 20 million worldwide, 548,000 in the United States.]

WN: Now, why is it that your mom went back to Japan and took you folks?

ES: Well, I guess, with the income gone, she figured she cannot support three kids. And of course her parents were concerned, too. I think my mother's father [Kikutaro Muraoka] came over [to Hawai'i] too, I'm not too sure. And he stayed in Kaka'ako. That's one thing I remember, Kaka'ako, you know. What stage of the (period) he came, I don't know. But I guess they must have recalled them, so three of us went back. And then, I think they had some kind of immigration law at that time, and there was a stipulation that you had to come back within a year, or they were going to come out with an [alien] exclusion law [1924]. You know, this racial stuff was coming up already at that time, see. So she decided to come back, and she felt out of place, you know, going back and forth to (both) grandparents' place. So naturally she didn't have enough money for all three kids. So I, being the eldest—my older sister had died earlier—she said well, she'd take me over [back to Hawai'i], and then left the two kids with (her) grandparents.

WN: In Japan.

ES: Japan. And the girl died the following year, I think. But my brother survived and grew up [in Japan], went to school. And I don't know, I think he made it through high school, then he got a job with the Manchurian railroads, so he went to Manchuria until World War II broke out.

WN: So you were the only child that came back with your mother.

ES: Yeah, right.

WN: Do you remember your one year in Japan at all?

ES: Only a smattering. I know where the school was, because every time I go back to Japan, I try to visit the area. Then when my oldest granddaughter over here became eleven, I think, I took her to Japan to show her where I went to school. Well, first grade, so you know, not too much, but two things standing up in my mind. That when you are singing, you know, they call 'em *shōka*. Music class. I don't know if in America we had that kind, see. And to take the test at the end, the teacher plays organ and then you gotta sing the song, you know (chuckles). You know, (only) one year old and you don't know the language too good, try to sing a song, yeah. But I guess I did all right. And then one more thing was the math. They really drilled you in math, you know. And I'm really thankful for that, because after that, because of that math, every time I take test, I get good grades, you know. And that helped me. That's why I think I told you once, after I came back, I had to repeat English school, first grade. So I had three years of first grade. And then, subsequent to that, they let me skip—not skip grade but, only half a year each time and I made up for all the lost time, see. And I think math really helped me. And then another thing they had is what they call *shūshin*. I don't know what you'd say . . .

WN: Morals, yeah?

ES: Yeah, yeah. You know, they really stress that, see. And I guess over here you don't have such a thing, you know, grade school. So those three things really stuck with me as far as Japanese education is concerned.

WN: Way different from what you had at Kauluwela School?

ES: Oh yeah. Oh well, Kauluwela, I don't remember. I think I just went there to play mostly. (Chuckles) Well, after I came back [in 1923], I was kind of old, so I gradually picked things up. And I was looking at my album, and I saw myself, I guess, I was maybe, third, fourth grade pictures, you know. Then I start recalling, oh yeah, we had some older guys around because we were put in this experimental school. Kawānanakoa [Experimental] School started off as an offshoot of Royal School. You know, Royal School was the school before for the elites, yeah, the monarchy and all that. And I guess we were surplus kind of kids (chuckles), you know, come from Japan, you know. [Elite] people were predominant and we were shifted. And when they made the first shift, they borrowed a Japanese[-language] school at [Honpa] Hongwanji [Mission], on Fort Street, you know. They don't use the building in the morning, so we went there. And that gradually became bigger and bigger, and then they built the Kawānanakoa [Experimental] School. So I started off, partly at Fort Street, I mean Royal, but we went to Fort Street, and Fort Street School became Kawānanakoa. So I sort of summarized my education. Grade school was Kawānanakoa.

WN: So when you came back from Japan, where did you folks live? Same place?

ES: No. I was rereading what I wrote for my kids, and [where we lived] was where Chun Hoon [Pharmacy] is (now and our home was) right across. [The Hungry Lion Coffee Shop now occupies the Chun Hoon Pharmacy site.] Another relative from Japan had lived there, so, you know, they had kind of a big house, and they had lot of room. I guess, was sort of a one-floor type [of] apartment. Then, only me and my mother, so we didn't even need too much. So we stayed there. Then good thing, my mother's younger brothers came over [from Japan]. I think one came over first, and then the second one. But they had rented a place in Pauoa. So from there, I went to [live on] Pauoa Road. You know, I was telling you, close to the Iidas' (home), yeah. And we stayed there several years, and then I think he called his younger

brother, so I had two uncles staying with us. But unfortunately, the older one passed away. So he [younger uncle] was the breadwinner for all of us. My mother was just doing incidental kind of work, see, not a permanent job. No more skills at all. So after he passed away, you know, no place for us [to live], so I think my younger uncle went back to Japan, and my mother and I came back to Nu'uanu Street [i.e., Nu'uanu Avenue]. Only a few houses away from where I was born. There was a small alley, and there was a upstairs apartment, so we lived there. And my mother finally went to work as a maid for the Robinson [family]. And I was left alone, so *kaukau* and everything, the next-door lady used to take care of me. So I was, you know, just by myself living on. Because she [mother] would go to work early in the morning and then come home in the evening. And then I think at that time, she switched to that seamstress kind [of work], on Beretania Street, the tailor's shop. I don't know what the sequence was, but I came back to there.

Then my mother, somebody wanted to make go-between, match her with somebody. I have the picture, she looks pretty young, you know. So as I told you, the Kimura family in Waikīkī was related to my mother's side too. You know, Japan-style, all the relatives try to help each other, because *shinrui*. So the Kimura family said, "Oh, there's a man working." Mr. Kimura was a sort of head waiter at Moana Hotel. And Mr. [Matsuki] Tamura was working under him, and he [Kimura] said, "Oh, he's [Tamura] a conscientious man," you know. And goes to the Japanese school board and all that kind, so he's reliable, I guess. And so they matched them. Hindsight, I think they made a mistake because they lived together on Beretania Street near the art academy [i.e., Honolulu Academy of Arts]. You know, a rented place I guess, for one year, and they took me to Mr. Kimura's house in Waikīkī, so I lived with that family. You know, I guess maybe hard to merge one time, yeah. But when I live separately like that, without my mother, my thinking came different, you know. That was childhood, so I don't how much it affected me. But I never can call him, "Father," you know, "*Otōsan*." 'Cause I don't remember calling my real father, "Father." After they got married and they stay by themselves, funny thing, they came back to Nu'uanu Street again, when I joined them. And there was a lane from Nu'uanu Street, Kukui Lane, that wound its way out to Kukui Street. So we lived on the second floor there. I think when they moved, he [Matsuki Tamura] started working for a [telephone] cable company. And when the war [World War II] broke out, he was alien, so they laid him off, because he was carrying cables and going to post office, like that. Doing utility office work at the cable company, see. So that's when I came back to Nu'uanu Street again.

So I told you I get lot of affinity for Nu'uanu Street. And right in the same block, you know.

WN: So you spent most of your childhood at, around Nu'uanu and . . .

ES: Yeah.

WN: . . . Kukui area, yeah?

ES: Yeah.

WN: Why don't you tell me about it? Like, for example, what kind of families lived over there?

ES: Well, when I was born and lived there, before I went to Japan, was mostly Japanese people. And then, after I came back [in 1923] and went back to that area, Japanese people. But when I went to the Kukui Lane [in 1930], they had big tenement houses across from where we

lived. Was a mixture, all kind [of] people. But our camp was predominantly Japanese. And the stores, you know, like I can remember B. K. Yamamoto [Hardware Store] at the corner [of Nu'uanu and Beretania streets], and the Inukai Bakery. And then I can remember Tanabe Store, and then there was a plumber over there—oh, [Naoyuki] Hara, plumber. You know Ernest Hara?

WN: Yeah, yeah.

ES: His parents used to run Hara plumbing. And then came Teragawachi Watch Store. And then . . .

WN: These are all on Nu'uanu.

ES: Yeah. And then next to that was Hirota Florist.

WN: Hirota?

ES: Yeah, Hirota Florist. (One son) was a real good friend of mine. And next to that was a Chinese, sort of sundry store. And next to that was a shoe store. And the reason I remember that, I used to go there for read [news]paper (chuckles). And the man, he used to buy *amaguri*, you know that roasted chestnut? He used to always give me. So, you know, that kind of people that really treat you nice, you kind of—I stayed. And then next to that one, a restaurant I think, Abe. The Abe family used to run. And then next to that, there was another lane going towards what we used to call Tin Can Alley. Schubert's Cyclery. I don't know if you know Peter Schubert. He was a good cyclist. Then there was the lane, and right across that was Shirai *shōten*. And next to that was a barbershop.

WN: Now these are all . . .

ES: All Japanese, you know. Practically.

WN: All on Nu'uanu. This is all on Nu'uanu Street.

ES: All Nu'uanu Street.

WN: All on the 'Ewa side? Going on the 'Ewa side.

ES: Yeah, yeah. So I'm going up that way, see.

WN: You're going toward the [Nu'uanu] Valley.

ES: Yeah. Toward Kukui Street, until Kukui Street, I thought I'd give you (chuckles) what I remember.

WN: So, you're telling me all from Beretania . . .

ES: B. K. Yamamoto to Kukui Street.

WN: Okay, B. K. Yamamoto is on the corner of . . .

ES: Corner, yeah.

WN: . . . Beretania and Nu'uaniu.

ES: Yeah, right, right.

WN: So you're going 'Ewa side of Nu'uaniu, going *mauka*.

ES: *Mauka*, yeah.

WN: Okay.

ES: Okay. So had Shirai Shōten. And they had grocery store, food stuff. And then they had a liquor store. Next to that was Uyehara, I think, barbershop. And next to that is Iwanaga Hardware Store. And next to that was Nakano Candy Store. And next to that was Suzuki, I think, they used to have a restaurant. And next to that was a butcher shop. I forgot who was running, but I know that the butcher, his name was Sone. He used to go bicycling and he used to form a baseball group. And then, finally, at the corner [Nu'uaniu and Kukui], was a florist, Chinese people. Pang See, or something like that, was running that. (Years later at) that corner we were (operating) Rainbow Sweet Shop at that corner.

WN: You folks?

ES: Yeah, later on. This is way later. And across the street from that, that Hawaiiya Liquor Store, you know. And I think he's [owner] living in Big Island now. He had a liquor store, and next door to that, used to be a tailor's shop. And then Sera Shōten was there, too. The Sera girl, the girl that married one of the Sera boys, I think had [stores in] the Ala Moana Shopping Center and Kaimukī side, later on. And then, from there, if I can remember, Sera Store, and then had another barbershop. And from there on, I don't remember too well, because, you know, was getting out of my distance, and not the kind of place I go to (chuckles).

WN: Did they have like a Club Garage over there or something?

ES: That was on the Kukui Street side. Hosoi Mortuary was over there. And they [Club Garage] had parking for everybody, plus the fact that, I think the place, they use 'em for athletics too, you know. Because some boxers developed over there.

WN: Oh yeah?

ES: Yeah. Herman Hosoi was a good boxer. Hosoi Mortuary, the president. He passed away but his family had good boxers. That is across on the Kukui Street side. And this side had parking and a billiard parlor, and a *furo-ya*, you know, Japanese-style *furo*. But beyond that, I don't know too much.

WN: So people that lived in that area, what, most of them worked in those stores and things?

ES: Right, right. And then, in the back, they have place to sleep like that. And two floors, see. So like the Shirai people used to live on the upstairs floor. And the others, like the candy store people used to live in the back, you know. Two stories, home in the back. Mostly like that, they didn't commute, you know, to go, they just lived there. Like B. K. Yamamoto, I think,

they must have had another place. I don't know [them] too well. I used to play with the boys, baseball. There used to be a lane back there. And lot of cottages. So the ones that could afford may have lived in those cottages, you know. I can visualize the fellow, but I forgot the name. The father used to own lot of cottages there. And we used to all play together, so. And around the corner, Hakubundo [Book Company] used to be there. And that's where (Matsumoto) Lane ran down all the way to (another lane).

WN: Now when I was growing up, you know, this is after the war and everything but, they had, like, Beretania Follies. I don't know if you remember that.

ES: Oh yeah, yeah.

WN: Beretania Follies. But that wasn't there when you were growing up there, right?

ES: That was towards Tin Can Alley, we used to call 'em. I don't remember that kind of stuff, 'cause, you know (chuckles). Afterwards, of course, yeah, I know all about that, see.

WN: Yeah.

ES: And some of my friends, you know, (came from) that side, because, as I said, my mother used to work for that tailor. The tailor was almost three stores away from Tin Can Alley, see. And . . .

WN: Tin Can Alley, now, what—where did it start?

ES: From Beretania Street. And then came out Kukui Street.

WN: So that whole block?

ES: Well, just a small area.

WN: Was it Chinatown, including Chinatown?

ES: Well, Chinatown was across from Beretania Street.

WN: Oh, *makai*.

ES: Yeah.

WN: Oh, so you're talking about *mauka* of Chinatown.

ES: *Mauka* of Beretania Street, yeah. In fact, I don't know if Tin Can Alley passed Maunakea [Street], or was part of Maunakea, you know. 'Cause as the streets got repaved and changed the configuration, I kind of lost track.

WN: 'Cause little further toward 'Ewa was the Nu'uanu Stream already, right?

ES: Yeah, yeah, yeah. We call that River Street, yeah?

WN: River Street.

ES: Back there they had a Chinese[-language] school too, you know, later on. Mun Lun School. There used to have Island Paradise School there. They used to use that place in the morning. So when my kids grew up, I was living Nu'uau and Kukui Street. The closest [school] was Island Paradise [School]. So, as I told you before, I like to give them the best education possible, so I sent them to private school. Because Island Paradise was started by [Reverend Ernest H. Hunt], he used to be *bon-san*. So I respected his philosophy of education. So I sent all my kids to Island Paradise. That's why, my kids, not one of 'em went to public school.

WN: Now, Tin Can Alley, was that someplace where you folks didn't go, as kids?

ES: Well, we had friends there. You know, a lot of fishermen used to live there. So, in fact, that corner of the alley, they used to supply fishing supplies like that. You know, when the sampan come in and they need food and all that. And I think some of that people there were fishermen. And December 7, I think [some] lost their lives. I don't know if was a particular family there, but, you know, fishermen come from certain place in Japan, they all know each other. So they congregate, see, and they make a camp and live around there. So that's how those things grew, and I guess they make their money or move out and then the other people come in. And that place becomes a place for prostitutes and porno kind [of] stuff like that, you know.

WN: Was it that way when you were young?

ES: I don't remember, as I said, I didn't frequent that place, see. I stuck to this side. The playground was across from B.K. Y[amamoto]. Not the corner, but where the present parking and the housing are on Beretania Street, between Pauahi and Nu'uau. That used to be a playground. We used to call 'em Beretania Park. And when we cannot play there, we used to go 'A'ala Park. And do the fishing in River Street (chuckles). All around there.

WN: What you used to catch in the river [i.e., Nu'uau Stream]?

ES: 'O'opu and get [ā]holehole, you know.

WN: Oh yeah?

ES: Yeah. And you know underneath the bridge? We used to put two hooks, see. The upper one we used to put 'ōpae, let 'em swim. And then the [ā]holehole would come out, go for that. And we get a bigger hook underneath, and we stuck 'em. Then you get plenty fight, because, you know, they not by the mouth, you stuck any kind of place.

WN: Oh, oh, I see, you jerk it upward.

ES: Yeah, and then you stuck.

WN: Stuck on the [fish's] body.

ES: Yeah. That's how we used to catch plenty [ā]holehole.

WN: 'Cause I guess, it's right near the ocean. Brackish water.

ES: Yeah. Towards King Street already, see. And of course on the upper side was so shallow, and

not much, you know. But they get 'o'opu, and then we used to call 'em *kamasu*, I think, barracuda. Barracuda used to come up to feed on that kind [of] small fish. And they used to stay, but we don't know how to catch barracuda.

WN: What did you call the barracuda?

ES: *Kamasu*.

WN: *Kamasu*.

ES: Yeah.

WN: Oh, I never heard that before.

ES: Yeah, *kamasu*. I guess a Japanese name for that fish. And then eventually I—this is way later—I came friends with a fellow, Chinese boy, that used to live across from where Foster [Botanic] Gardens is [today]. And he bought a boat, so I used to go out with him on the rowboat, before we could afford a outboard motor, you know, we used to row out. And then we go out there, out of Honolulu Harbor, we used to drift and then catch the *moana* [*moano*], and in season, catch *aji*, *akule*, yeah. And then *pāpio*. And then we got smart. Used to have a buoy, see, coming in to [Honolulu] Harbor, so we tie a rope [to the buoy] and then we used to put down all kind of bait, throw 'em out and sometimes the big fish will catch 'em and they caught themselves. So when the buoy start shaking (chuckles), we row the boat and we used to catch pretty good, you know. And then out of Sand Island, there's breakers. And we used to catch balloon fish. And the balloon fish, we used to bring 'em to teahouses, to sell 'em. You know, they got a good cook that knew how to slice 'em, otherwise it's poisonous, see.

WN: Which teahouse?

ES: I don't remember. The guy used to do because his father used to be selling fish at Maunakea Street, you know that fish market. So they had the connection. 'Cause me, I going only for the joy of fishing (chuckles). Young-kid time, well, that was my biggest joy, fishing.

WN: So, bamboo pole?

ES: Yeah. You don't need too many equipment as such. So when I went Japan, I used to go fishing. Well, back of my grandfather's house was a ocean already. His house was in Shin Minato, Minato means "harbor," and Shin means "new." So when the tide comes up, come right up to his house, you know, the stone wall. I used to go fish over there too. And when the tide goes out, we used to go dig clams, you know. So I was brought up in that kind of fishing. So I really gravitated toward fishing. Plus the fact that the boy, Fujii family that had the tailor shop, he liked fishing. Takao I think his name was. We used to call 'em *Taka-chan*. He used to take me along. He was little older. And funny thing, you know, when he grew up and later on I met, I saw his name down at the Kewalo Basin—I forgot the name of that big company that has all kind of fishing supplies and the boats and all that. He was connected with that.

WN: Still there now, you mean?

ES: Yeah, I think so.

WN: Oh, McWayne [Marine Supply].

ES: Yeah, he was connected. So I guess he was in the fishing business right through life.

WN: So where exactly did you go fishing? Right down off River Street?

ES: Yeah, those places, more towards King Street, though. Then as we grew older and had the boat, then we used to go outside and drift outside of Sand Island for certain kind of fish, and then we drift towards Ala Moana for *pāpio* and, you know, bottom fish mostly. *Moana* [*moano*], yeah. And you catch the other kind, you know, the green, slimy kind. What do they call that? We throw 'em away, but, you know, Hawaiian fish. I forgot the name.

WN: Green, slimy fish?

ES: *Htnālea*.

WN: Oh, *htnālea*.

ES: Yeah. And when we lucky we catch *menpachi*. So, outside Ala Moana side was really good, but that's a hell of a way to row, you know. And then come back time too, when you go against the tide, you get tired. Once we got the outboard motor, wasn't so bad. So, up to then, I really went out fishing. But after that, well, when I grew older, played all kind sports down at the Nu'uanu Y[MCA, Young Men's Christian Association], see.

WN: So, mostly Japanese living and some Chinese, you said.

ES: Yeah.

WN: Can you think—anybody else?

ES: Had other kind [of] nationality, though, because sometimes I used to go peep from second floor. That kind, they get little drunk and then the womanizing kind, you know, going on in the camps. So I know had other kind [of] nationalities, but we don't associate with them. You know, our parents strict about that, see. So we just stick to the Japanese people that we know. And I forgot to tell you on that—I described Nu'uanu Street on the 'Ewa side, but on the *Waikiki* side, started with Iida *shōten*, yeah. Beretania and Nu'uanu corner, and then had the [Noboru] Asahina, dentist right there. And then had garage or something.

WN: Yeah, I think that was Club Garage.

ES: Yeah. And then, right at the corner of Kukui Lane was Shimizu Photo. And down below used to be Kishimoto Grocery Store. And from there on, kind of hazy, but I know had the—was it Minatoya or something? Restaurant, you know. They moved to Pauahi or Maunakea side, or whatever. And had florists. We had quite a bit of florists on Nu'uanu Street. That girl, I forgot her name. But she was a nice-looking girl, we all had eyes on her, that's why I (chuckles) remember the place, more coffee shop kind. And then we had a garage. And then I think eventually Nu'uanu Congregational Church was at that corner, Kukui and Nu'uanu corner. And across the street was another service station. And then as I told you, on Kukui Street side, they had that mortuary, Borthwick Mortuary. Borthwick is still around there. And then that saimin stand and the lane, and then the Mun Lun School. And that [Cherry Blossom]

Saimin Stand is the one that the [U.S. anti-aircraft shell] fell. I told you, December 7, [1941].

WN: Oh yeah, yeah, we can talk about that. But that was on Kukui, yeah.

ES: On the Nu‘uanu and Kukui corner was—this (*Waikīkī-mākaī*) corner was the church, Nu‘uanu Congregational Church, until they moved up toward School Street. And then from School Street they went up to Pali Highway side. But across the street from the church, on Kukui Street, was that service station and then Borthwick Mortuary, and then that [Cherry Blossom] Saimin Stand. And beyond that, going up, I don’t remember too much on the *Waikīkī* side of Nu‘uanu Street, until it reach Vineyard [Street]. There was a stream on Nu‘uanu and Vineyard. Gee, what happened to the stream? Must be still there, somehow. Or did they divert it towards River Street? I don’t know how they diverted that water, but used to be a stream, you know. And Nu‘uanu and Vineyard—oh, there is a clinic, yeah, that Chinese medical clinic.

WN: Chock-Pang [Clinic]?

ES: Yeah. Right around there, on the Vineyard Street side, used to be a stream. But I don’t know how . . .

WN: Probably still there.

ES: Yeah, maybe underground, I don’t know.

WN: So besides fishing, what else did you have to have fun as a kid?

ES: As I said, I gravitated toward Nu‘uanu Y [MCA]. Not too much as a youngster, because my mother, you know, it cost money to go Nu‘uanu Y. But as I grew older, I didn’t want to go *furo-ya* too much. You know, bathhouse. So Nu‘uanu Y used to be my (chuckles) bathhouse. And then, of course, when we became high school age, we used to have Hi-Y clubs over there. We used to have all volunteer leaders, you know. So that’s why, later on, I volunteered for this Triangle Club. All these fifty years, I’m still their leader. We meet informally now. But we finally wound up as an investment club. But that’s how it is to operate in Nu‘uanu Y, you become a member and you grow up, and then you become a leader for another generation. And like Nu‘uanu Y used to really serve us Oriental kids, because Central Y was *Haole* YMCA. And they moved, of course, to near Ala Moana now [on Atkinson Drive], but before they were Downtown, you know.

WN: Where Downtown?

ES: Oh, where all these buildings coming up now. Alakea and Bishop—no, Alakea and Hotel Street, that corner. Right next to that [Hawaiian] Telephone Company. They had a big building there.

WN: So, not far from the armed forces Y [i.e., Army-Navy YMCA] then.

ES: Yeah. Armed forces Y was further down towards Richards Street. And Nu‘uanu Y was Fort and Vineyard. Sometimes we used to go to Central Y, but the membership there was more *Haole* people. Now, I don’t know, but, you know, those days. And Nu‘uanu Y was Oriental. So . . .

WN: Did Central Y have better facilities than . . .

ES: Oh yeah. We used to go there, go shoot pool, you know, billiards, like that. Nu'uanu Y didn't have that kind [of] stuff, see, mostly just gym and the swimming pool. And later on, they had the tennis court. So I used to play tennis. And they built the handball court. But I'm really thankful for Nu'uanu Y, though. When I grew up, they had a campaign to—they had to relocate, I guess, and they got a new building. So I even went out collecting money for Nu'uanu Y. Just like now, you know, they have the after-school care, you know.

WN: A-plus?

ES: Yeah, A-plus. Well, that was A-plus to us, those days. But don't have to pay, see. And all volunteer work. And Christmastime, the leaders nice enough to give us candy and things like that which we couldn't get at home. You know, Christian idea of giving, giving of yourself. That's why I remember some of those leaders, too, to this day. Of course when we came Hi-Y, the Miho family, Katsuro Miho, the old-time lawyer, he was one of our advisors. We had lot of nice people. And of course, that organization eventually gave me my trip to the Mainland. Which was a big change in my life. (Chuckles)

WN: Okay. You were living, more or less, as like an only child. Only mother, without a father.

ES: Yeah.

WN: What was that like? For example, what kind of chores did you have to do around the house?

ES: Hardly anything though, that I remember. Because my mother would come home at night and do the things, you know. And then we don't have yard, nothing, we just get our two-room apartment. Nothing much to do. And then, for eating, the next-door lady would feed me. Or later on, I used to just feed myself. *Nokorimono*, what they call. Even now [i.e., today], over here. (Laughs) They [ES's family] get up late, so I get up early. Lunchtime, they not home, so I just use the microwave. So I'm used to that kind [of] living. The bare necessities, you prepare. No more the throwaway kind [of] stuff.

WN: So after school was *pau*, you just went to Nu'uanu Y.

ES: Nu'uanu Y, yeah. Of course, Japanese[-language] school first.

WN: Oh, where was Japanese[-language] school?

ES: Up [Honpa] Hongwanji [Mission]. Fort *Gakuen*, yeah.

WN: So, Fort Street and then . . .

ES: Yeah.

WN: . . . Nu'uanu Y was on Fort Street also.

ES: Fort Street, yeah.

WN: Which is all walking distance.

ES: Right, right, yeah. But when I came older was a chore though, from McKinley [High School] to . . .

WN: Oh.

ES: And when you come from *chūgaku*, from intermediate [school], you have to wear suit, you know, Hongwanji.

WN: Yeah?

ES: Yeah, so, you know, you try walk from McKinley to Hongwanji, wearing coat like that, so you carry the coat, you know. That's why . . .

WN: Tie too?

ES: Yeah, coat and tie.

WN: This is for Hongwanji Japanese[-language] school?

ES: Yeah.

WN: But McKinley didn't have that [policy].

ES: No. That's why was a chore!

(Laughter)

ES: So when I had a good excuse to quit, I told my mother, "Ey, I going University [of Hawai'i] now, I cannot go Japanese[-language] school." Because university, like chemistry lab, and all the labs conflict, see.

So she said, "Okay, you don't have to go Japanese[-language] school."

So I never did graduate high school Japanese[-language] school.

WN: Okay, let me turn the tape over.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Okay, so most of the things were walking distance. Did you ever have to take the trolley, streetcar?

ES: Oh yeah, we used to. But those days was cheap, I forgot, nickel or whatever. And then, those days, (chuckles), sometimes when you think the collector coming, you just jump off. (Laughs) You know, steal a ride. But another way, like I remember some of the richer families downtown, especially when I used to go McKinley, and then the University [of Hawai'i], like

Hoichi Ogawa I really remember because corner of Beretania and River Street, they used to have a pharmacy. He eventually became a pharmacist. And then he had a pharmacy in Kapahulu side. But I think he sold that. But he used to have a car, so, I get a ride with him in the morning, then I don't have to walk down. Otherwise we had to catch the trolley to go to school. But most of the time, we tried to walk, though. And even when I was down there, and I used to work [Libby, McNeill &] Libby cannery, we used to walk all the way to Libby cannery. Follow the railroad track, you know, certain place. As I told you, I never owned a car in my life, so (chuckles) I had good training. (Chuckles)

WN: Oh, in your whole life?

ES: Yeah.

WN: You never owned?

ES: Yeah, every time I buy the car, I used my credit for my kids' car. They needed a car, yeah? So I buy 'em for them. Because you know, when I used to live on Kukui and Nu'uanu Street, to rent a garage, cost more than the apartment we were living in.

WN: How much did you pay rent for the apartment?

ES: Oh, I don't recall already, but was way down, boy, really cheap.

WN: Who was the landlord, by the way?

ES: Chinese people used to be landlord. That's one thing, the Chinese, smart, that kind of stuff.

WN: So Chinese were the landlords and the tenants were mostly Japanese?

ES: Japanese, yeah. Of course, we had a sprinkling of Chinese too. But they were, I don't know how many years ahead of the Japanese in coming to Hawai'i, but they were one step ahead, so to speak. Even now, when you weigh the wealth, the Chinese got 'em. Per family income, like that. They all in the higher plane. That's why when I used to go YMCA, I used to admire Chinn Ho. He was on the board of trustees. And I used to hear about his doings. So that gave me the impetus to study on my own, you know. And later on I even worked part-time for a stockbroker, to learn the trade. That's why my friends trust me and we form investment groups, like that. When the boys came old and they went on their own, architect, real estate, like that. But we always meet together, you know, how things are. Oh, you making money, and this and that. So I form an investment group. (Laughs)

WN: So you went to McKinley High School. While you were going to high school, did you have any idea of what you wanted to do?

ES: No, no idea. Well, I had one idea, but it was unattainable, 'cause when I was Kawānanakoa [Experimental] School, Miss Beveridge, she used to be . . .

WN: Kathryn Beveridge?

ES: She was related to the manager, or something, of Waimānalo [Sugar Company]. Oh, she was a real nice lady for me.

WN: She was at Kawānanakoa, right?

ES: Yeah.

WN: Yeah, yeah, yeah, okay.

ES: And she told me to go to law school, be a lawyer. So that was my first ambition. If UH [University of Hawai'i] had a law school, I would have gone there. But when I went McKinley [High School], no more law school, in Hawai'i. And to go over to Mainland is out of the picture, you know. Then a math teacher there, Mrs. Wilson—as I told you, I like math—she said, oh, she can get scholarship for me to Colorado School of Mines. And that's when I hesitated because those days, we didn't have counselors as such. So when somebody tell you to go school of mines, you think you gotta go learn mining engineering. And, see, come back to Hawai'i, no more mines, yeah? (Chuckles) So I said, "No, I don't think I can," But if I had known that that school, besides that, had all kind of curricula, I may have gone, but I doubt if my parents could have afforded me transportation, like that. You know, that's an expense. And then, you go over there, you gotta find a place to live. You cannot afford dorm money, maybe, and you gotta work part-time. So I did the next best thing, I thought, well, living in Hawai'i, you can't go wrong with sugar industry. So I took sugar technology [major], which was my biggest mistake.

WN: Why?

ES: Well, the prejudice.

WN: Oh, we can get into that when you started work at Waialua [Agricultural Company], yeah?

ES: When I was young at McKinley, they not gonna provide counseling. It's up to your parents or somebody to tell you these things. Like, now, we do it for our kids, but those days, nobody to counsel us, so you would take the best possible, and I never had plantation life, so I didn't realize the different [pay] scale between *Haoles* and the Orientals, like that. So I said, "Oh, I'll go take [up] sugar tech." And there was another fellow named Shigeo Okubo, he and I were good friends. He was really smart too. And later he went to Johns Hopkins [University], got his Ph.D. And even after he graduated, he was teaching—an instructor at UH. You know, math like that, engineering. He and I said, "'Ey, let's go take sugar tech."

I said, "Okay."

Dumb. We didn't know any better. We took sugar tech. When we went to UH, we had to register for something, see.

WN: Yeah, so backing up, what was McKinley like?

ES: Oh, McKinley was good, though.

WN: Was [principal] Miles Cary there?

ES: Yeah, Miles Cary was there. And I used to belong to good clubs, that's why I had good playmates, you know. Like McKinley—MCC, they call 'em, McKinley Citizenship Club. Of course, that was co-ed, but that was sort of a do-gooders club for the whole school. Any kind

of event. And I was in the chemistry club 'cause I like science. So, you know, chemistry students are all good in math, and that kind of student, so I had good friends. In fact, later on, my friends from there wanted to join Nu'uanu Y—this is when they were young men already. I invited them over. And I was already in my own young men's group, so we formed a group and they called themselves Newtonians. Sir Isaac Newton.

(Laughter)

ES: That's how steeped they were in science. And then of course, National Honor Society, I was a member too. So I had good environment of friends that wouldn't lead me astray. And no more car, so what the hell, we not going to date anybody, like that. Some of 'em, well, I guess they were dating, but I didn't have car, so I cannot afford dating. That's why, I guess, eventually I got married to our next-door neighbor.

(Laughter)

ES: Girl.

WN: Did she go to McKinley too?

ES: Later, yeah. We were five years apart. So when I was graduating UH, she was going McKinley, I think. But of course, when I first moved over and she was a neighbor, they had five girls. That was my first contact with the. . . . Of course, by then I had a half-brother. But girls in the family, I never had, you know, in childhood. So I used to really mingle with them. I didn't realize I was going to get married to one of 'em.

(Laughter)

ES: I guess you could have gone astray all kind of ways at McKinley High School. We collected everybody in town, go to that one high school. Didn't have Farrington, didn't have Roosevelt. And Punahou [School], we cannot afford. And St. Louis [College], well, the Chinese people used to go St. Louis. I had some good friends, but they all went, good ones anyway, went St. Louis.

WN: Which was still 'A'ala Park side? Or was it already . . .

ES: By that time, yeah, I think was 'A'ala Park side, yeah, College Walk. And then eventually it moved [to its present location].

WN: Yeah.

ES: So I had two good Chinese friends, but they went St. Louis.

WN: And how did you get from your house to McKinley?

ES: Walk.

WN: Walk?

ES: Yeah. Or get a ride from, as I said, Mr. Ogawa. Hoichi, you know. He had a car. His family was kind of well-to-do, so I used to bum ride. And then from McKinley, go to Japanese[-

language] school, walk.

WN: And then from Japanese[-language] school, you went to the Y?

ES: Yeah. And then sometimes I'll take a bath there and then come home. But if not, I'll come home and then go there just for bath, but before that, I used to go swimming. (By then we) were in Hi-Y and Young Men's Division, then we used to go into all kind of sports, especially basketball, we used to enter the Japanese basketball league. And when I grew older and I could afford, then I bought tennis racket, and I used to play for class C, city-wide tennis, like that. But certain kind of things, I couldn't, because my leg was weak. I'm half crippled, you know, one side. So, like swimming, my kicking not so good, so you know what they make me do? Well, backstroke is not bad but I used to be good in plunge. All you do is plunge and then the farthest you go, you the winner, see. (Laughs)

WN: Oh.

ES: That's what we used to call plunge, you know. I used to do that. So lot of my activities, I got hampered by my leg. You know, one side short. Who really helped me was Tommy Kaulukukui. He was little bit back of me, you know—or was he ahead of me? Anyway, he came from Hilo side, and he was a good athlete. And he had a sort of a limp too, you know. And he was just like me, one side leg shorter and smaller, I think. So I said, "Well, if the guy can become All-American," (chuckles). You know, you heard of his UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles, exploits], yeah. Kick-off, he run all the way.

WN: Yeah, 103 yards.

ES: Yeah. So I said, "I can do." But I never played football, though, that's too rough for me. But one thing I regretted I couldn't do because of my leg, was judo. When I was going Japanese[-language] school, we had a good judo group. And I couldn't take judo because they kick the leg. So my mother said, "No, you don't take judo, because of your lousy leg. You might be crippled for life."

My cripple was hardly noticeable, see. Unless I tell people, they don't know. But if I look at my picture, standing, you could see the leg is small. And then, after I grew up, and got particular about clothing, my wife had to hem one side, about half an inch, or five-eighth of an inch shorter. But I couldn't afford that kind corrective shoes and all that.

WN: What kind of jobs did you have? Did you have any jobs during high school?

ES: High school would be just summertime.

WN: Cannery.

ES: Cannery. Because [attending] Japanese[-language] school wouldn't permit us to go work after school.

WN: So, while you were going McKinley, you know, obviously you were doing really well, gradewise and everything, so you knew early on that you were going to go on to college?

ES: Nah. I didn't think, because from my group, hardly anybody went, you know. I was amazed.

But as I told you, my stepfather was—when he was working in Waikīkī, he was affiliated with that [Waikīkī] Japanese-language School in Waikīkī. So I guess he was the type, even if he was a waiter, and [was an] immigrant from Japan, lot of people used to go to him to have him write letters for them, you know. And he used to read things for them, like that. So I guess he must have been a pretty well-educated man. That's why Mr. Kimura, I think, told my mother about him, so she got married. But that's one thing, he didn't object to me, you know. If I wanted to go university, he said go.

I said, "Well, you know, *gessha*, tuition."

(Telephone rings. Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

ES: So then he said, "Well, go work your way."

Then that's when I start working. And that's another reason why I quit Japanese[-language] school, I had to go work.

WN: While you were at UH?

ES: Yeah.

WN: So, where did you go work during UH time?

ES: Those days, they used to have WPA [Works Progress Administration], [President Franklin] Roosevelt's idea. And at university, they used to have a farm out there. So between classes, I used to go water and weeding like that, you know, experimental plot. 'Cause I'm in sugar tech, so I don't mind doing that kind. But that was my ruination though, in my grades. You know why? I didn't have to take, like geometry and calculus, but I took, because I liked math, as I told you. And my calculus class was right after—I work in between classes—watering the place. So I go there, I start sleeping, you know, and my mind is not clear. You know, do all the manual labor and come back to class. That's why, I didn't—that's my only D, I think, university (laughs). And C was physical ed, my leg not so good. But otherwise I had pretty good grades in university too. Otherwise, I guess, they wouldn't have taken me into Phi Kappa Phi [honors society], when I graduated.

So I worked there, and then, that wasn't enough, so Sundays, I used to be yardboy at the—during the workdays too, but Sunday especially—Church of the Crossroads, on University Avenue. Those days, they didn't have nice building like that, you know. They used to have a small pavilion, open pavilion, and every Sunday I have to go early, open the place up and set up for Reverend [Galen] Weaver to get started. So that was another type of work I did. And what else? Of course cannery was the main one, income.

WN: Still going there for summers.

ES: Yeah, summertime. And I had no connection with getting other good part-time jobs, see. So whatever was available. But that three things, I really worked hard at it. And then, later on, I don't recall, but partially, I think, I must have been doing some government-subsidized kind of work at YMCA. I got more involved over there. I got to know more the people and—that's why, when I graduated, they felt sorry for me, no more job, so they give me janitor job. And you know who was the secretary then? Hung Wai Ching. You heard of Hung Wai Ching,

yeah?

WN: Mm hmm.

ES: He was a strong backer of Orientals, you know. Even during the war, he helped out. And Hung Wai said, "Sayama, you don't mind doing that kind? I can let you work for Mr. Arakawa," the head janitor, see.

I said, "Oh yeah, anything to supplement my income." And of course, that was after I graduated, and I said, "Chee, I get nothing to show for graduating university."

WN: Well, why couldn't you find a job?

ES: Nobody would hire me. As I told you, the prejudice.

WN: Were you one of the few Orientals in sugar tech?

ES: There were fifteen of us [graduates]. Ten Orientals, five *Haole* boys. The five *Haole* boys all were given student-in-training at HSPA [Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association] experiment station. And the ten Orientals, not one of us got job on the plantation. And I was the only one, eventually I got on. But before that, I work as janitor, only few months, though, but I hustle like hell to work on the plantation. I said, "Chee, I went to school for nothing."

But the other guys, they were just as bad. You know Katashi Nose, you see his column in the [newspaper], on that ham radios?

WN: Yeah, yeah.

ES: Yeah. And he was a [college] teacher. He was with us. Sugar tech.

WN: Katashi Nose.

ES: Yeah. And then, I forgot his name, but I think he passed away, something Ho, he became a doctor later on.

WN: You folks tried to get jobs with plantations?

ES: I guess so, I didn't ask personally, because we were scattered. But Koji Ikeda, that's another fellow. In fact, he took my job at Waialua [Agricultural Company] plantation. You know, I told him about it, and he said well, he's gonna try. And they hired him because he was same class with me. And of course, when I quit the plantation, Mr. [John] Midkiff [manager of Waialua Agricultural Company] told me, "You gonna be blackballed. You won't be able to get a job on the plantation, so you gonna let your education go to waste?"

I said, "I don't care."

WN: Okay, so, okay, we're talking about 1937 when you started for Waialua plantation. How did you get that job?

ES: Well, my mother's cousin was a cook. Her relative was working at Waialua plantation. And

Mr. [Mark] Robinson had plenty land in O'ahu Sugar [Company], you know. So he was connected, you know, old family kind. Missionary family. So he had connections. But that too was a plus for me, see. But I think the most important thing was, for some reason, the agriculturalist there [Waialua Agricultural Company] was a Japanese. I forgot his name. I can still picture him, but later on I found out he was a protégé of the Atherton family. So he was head agriculturalist there. You can't imagine, you know, those days, a nisei being a head agriculturalist. So I said, "If he's gonna be my boss, I will have a chance." And of course, he hired me because of my being a nisei too, I think. You know, because all the *Haole* boys are student-in-training, they not gonna work for plantation. They gonna bide their time until they get a good position. And the Mainland *Haoles* come, they won't hire 'em for sugar, they hire 'em for diversified agriculture, see. Or they would work Castle & Cooke, which is a parent [company of Waialua Agricultural Company].

WN: So the job that you got at Waialua was more of a lower level . . .

ES: Yeah. Sort of, you know, assistant to him in paper. We did experimental work with potato and other agricultural products besides sugar. But sugar was the main thing. But they were breaking me in, see. But the way they broke me in, got me mad. Because I was made partner with a guy from Mainland. His specialty was potato. But he was working for Castle & Cooke Downtown, but all the people that work good-level position Downtown, they had to go to plantation and go through exposure starting with *hō hana*. And drive mule, spray poison, and you cut cane, and you *hāpai kō* to the train. We had to do all that.

WN: You had to do all that?

ES: Yeah. 'Cause schoolwork doesn't mean anything to them, as [much] as practical work and the appreciation of what the other laborers are doing. That's breaking you in, sort of, you know. But the only gripe I had was that guy (who had) education in potato was getting his monthly salary from Castle & Cooke. Me, I was getting piecemeal pay. You know, I was working with a laborer. You work *hō hana*, you get paid by the line, see. And then they keep track. And christ, a city jack like me cannot keep up with that kind. And because I was living in the dormitory, I can't even barely make dormitory money. So I get nothing to take home to my parents.

WN: You had to pay to live in the dorms?

ES: Yeah.

WN: In Waialua?

ES: Yeah. Of course they feed us too, see. So if I was a plantation boy and my parents were on the plantation, not bad, but I gotta go there. And this was before ILWU [International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union] was formed. And there were niseis on the plantation and other people, that had those things in mind already. It was fomenting. So if I had continued with them [laborers], I think I would have been (chuckles) one of the leaders of ILWU. 'Cause later on, I had an opportunity to vent myself by attending a conference. New Americans Conference run by Reverend [Takie] Okumura from Makiki [Christian] Church. And at that time [1941], I vented out all my experience, for the sake of future niseis, you know, who gotta work on plantations. Because they cannot touch me, I was in federal civil service by then, see.

WN: So the *Haoles* that were—that graduated with you from UH that got the internships, where did they end up, usually?

ES: Oh, plantations, high. I think some of 'em practically almost reach managership, depending on what family they come from. Family connections meant a lot, those days.

WN: And the ones that came from the Mainland, were they college graduates too?

ES: Oh yeah, yeah. You know, aggie, as I said, the fellow knew his potato, see. But they hired him, not for the plantation, but that was just to expose him. And they did white-collar job Downtown, Castle & Cooke. And the living conditions were all right, but dormitory, you know those days, I guess depending on the lady that running the dormitory, but she used to use Spam for anything, you know. You know, they talk about Spam now, yeah, I used to get sick of Spam for lunch. We used to get that two-tiered kind *kaukau tin*?

WN: Yeah, yeah.

ES: Yeah. Rice underneath and *okazu* on top? Every time Spam, or Spam with something, you know. And you try eat that every day, you get sick! So you know what I used to do? Oh, get the other people when I was working in the field. I used to go exchange lunch. Those Japanese boys will bring *okazu* from their home. They tired of that, I guess. But they like the Spam, so we exchange. That's how I used to lunch.

WN: Because lot of those Japanese boys [already] lived out there [Waialua].

ES: Yeah.

WN: They had their families there.

ES: Yeah. They made *bentō* for them, see. So we used to exchange lunch. And then, weekends, I like to go home. I no more car. I cannot pay fare. So, as I told you, Nu'uaniu Street had this candy store. The man used to go once a week, around the island, distributing [i.e., delivering] candy. So I used to wait for him come Waialua, and I will ride him all the way to town, stay with my folks. You know, Saturday, Sunday. And then Sunday nighttime, I used to go down Pauahi Street and they had this kind [of] jitney that goes, you know, you carpool and then everybody pay their share, then we go back to Waialua.

WN: Oh, must have taken long time to get back out there.

ES: Yeah. I know they had O'ahu railroad [O'ahu Railway & Land Company], but I didn't think, you know. And then, the scheduling was such. And I heard of the carpooling, and I used to pay my way, pay my share of the gasoline or whatever, so was cheaper, I think. So that was my weekend. So, you know, wasn't the life for me. My *kaukau* no good. Weekend missing. And the pay was such, you know. I said, "Ah,"—I think lasted around six months, yeah, I forgot how long I lasted. (Laughs)

WN: How did you feel being a college graduate working amongst, you know, people that—some people didn't even go high school.

ES: Well, that was only in the beginning.

WN: Oh.

ES: Yeah. Then I was working under Mr. Kawahara. Sam Kawahara was the boss. He had education. And then, some of the other office people were all high school graduates. All statistical stuff, all kind [of] experiments. So I didn't mind, because they know more about plantation and sugar than me, even if I get my B.S. [Bachelor of Science degree in sugar technology], because they lived on the plantation, see.

WN: Right, right.

ES: Kameda brothers. I don't know if you know them. They were working in that place too. Some [employees] used to invite me to their home, you know. But I couldn't get used to with the plantation kind of life, you know, plantation work. As I said, that was the biggest mistake I made when I chose that profession, university. But no counseling.

My second choice was taking commercial bookkeeping, you know. Because I like math, see. So business math is duck soup after taking all that scientific math. So I should have gone in that. I would have been way ahead. 'Cause later on, I got into financing, stock market, and all that. Insurance. In fact, I don't know if I told you. I don't even list it. YMCA people told me, "Oh, why don't you go into insurance salesman?"

Brainard & Black, I think they recommended me, but I said, "Well, let me think it over." And I went down Honolulu Business College, and they had a real estate class, just to take license, you know. And Nils Tavares, the attorney general for State of Hawai'i was the instructor. So I figure, well, if I go to that class, I going cinch pass, yeah. (Chuckles)

So I went Honolulu Business College for two, three months. But in the meantime, I got the civil service call from . . .

WN: From Hickam [Field].

ES: . . . Hickam [Field], yeah. Well, I think I was there already. I forgot which came first. But I quit the Honolulu Business College early, though. But . . .

WN: You quit Waialua in 1938, right? Yeah, May '38 was when you quit Waialua. You know what I want to do? I want to stop right here and then continue from that point on, next time.

ES: Oh, okay.

WN: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape Nos. 22-5-2-92 and 22-6-2-92

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Etsuo Sayama (ES)

February 10, 1992

Kapālama Heights, O'ahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Etsuo Sayama on February 10, 1992, at his home in Kapālama Heights, O'ahu. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay, Mr. Sayama, let's see, last time we were talking about your experience at Waialua Agricultural Company.

ES: Oh yeah.

WN: And you didn't stay there for very long.

ES: Yeah.

WN: Can you tell me what happened or why you didn't stay very long?

ES: Well, as I told you, before I got into Waialua, among ten of us Orientals, I was the only one that got a position. And that was the only [plantation] I noticed that the head agriculturalist was a nisei, Sam Kawahara. And I later found out that he was there because he was a protégé, or he had a backer in Atherton Richards, you know. I think was Atherton Richards, oh, Atherton family anyway. You know, they're well known in Hawaiian history. So I figure, well, he was willing to hire me was one step. 'Cause my other nine Oriental classmates, nobody got the initial step, see.

So I went there, but I told you about the first thing that struck me was I didn't mind getting into the field work, and exposure to all the different departments in the plantation so that you know where you stand. But Waialua [Agricultural Company] was a subsidiary of Castle & Cooke. And Castle & Cooke, you know, all the Big Five [i.e., Castle & Cooke, American Factors, C. Brewer, Alexander & Baldwin, and Theo H. Davies] people Downtown would send the newcomers from Mainland, or anybody, to the plantation to get exposure. You know, all connected, see. Waialua plantation was getting into diversified farming and was specializing in potato. And what happened was this fellow from Minnesota or someplace, he was a potato expert, came to work, and we worked together. And we were going through the first initiation, so-called, *hō hana* and *hāpai* [*kō*—you know, cut cane and all these things, that manual labor type. And he would get a monthly (wage) whatever Castle & Cooke Downtown was paying him. But in my case, I was supposed to get so much a month, but I had to do what the same laborers were doing side by side with us.

WN: What was your title when you were hired?

ES: I don't remember. It's not like government, you know, they don't have [titles]. Government, I could have it all recorded, but over there. . . . And this was my first job. I guess practically an apprentice, the way they started me (chuckles). And I cannot keep up *hō hana* with the regular laborers. They used to pay us by how many lines, rows, you finished, see. So at the end of the week, I can't even hardly pay my dormitory. I had to stay in the dormitory, I didn't have a home, you know. Most of the people working in the plantation had plantation houses, but I didn't have a home. I couldn't even keep up (with dormitory) payments like that. That went on for weeks until I got indoctrinated. *Hō hana*, we'll do it maybe one week, or maybe less than the week. Or cut cane, you know. So at least you get the feeling of it. And of course another thing that kinda made me gripe was the fact that the five *Haole* boys that graduated with me came around to inspect what I was doing for the plantation. Here was I, doing actual work, and they were getting the benefit of my experiments or whatever, in potato or new type of cane, you know. They were getting good pay already.

So things started to pile up like that, and then there was a bit of unrest too, already, because the niseis were coming up in the plantation. And I remember the Kameda brothers and certain other people that was—well, they were good baseball players to begin with. The plantations had the rivalry, see. And they were in the influential position and they were talking about forming union. But, you know, they were still suppressed, and didn't have the strength, yeah. So later on, though [in 1945], the ILWU [International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union organized sugar workers on all islands].

When I saw all those things coming up, I said, gee, I don't think I can live rest of my life under that kind of condition. I wasn't exposed to plantation life, that's why I couldn't take it, you know. I was a city jack, all my life was spent in the city, so I didn't know what plantation life was like. And all these other niseis that grew up in the plantation, to them was normal, you know. For example, lunch. I told you about it. But because it's a well-known item of lunch in Hawai'i, I want to repeat it. But I was in the dormitory, so the lady would prepare for us *kaukau tin*. That's the standard way, you eat, take lunch. My friends living in their home would bring same kind, but they get, every day, different kind of *okazu*, you know. (Chuckles) My lunch will have Spam. Spam in all kind of shape, you know, not only fried Spam. When you see the same thing over and over, you get disgusted. So I would exchange lunch with the fellows. Those fellows are glad because at home they get *nishime* and all kind of Japanese kind of *okazu*. And they like Spam because maybe the family couldn't afford to buy Spam.

But all these things came about. And another thing was the social life. I got no social life out there, I don't know anybody. Once in a while, they would have a dance at the gym, you know. I always waited for the weekend to come. And I don't have a car so I catch this—on Nu'uano Street, where we were living, they had a candy store. The man will go and sell candy right around the island. So I would wait for him to come by on Saturday, I come home with him. And then go back late Sunday night. So social life was gone. I call it social life, but actually I guess I missed my girlfriend, next-door girl, who eventually became my wife. So all those things, you know, the working condition, the unfair wage system, and as I said, the isolation from the city that I was used to. I went to see Mr. [John] Midkiff, and I said, "You know, I'm thinking of leaving."

And I'll never forget this, but he told me, in a benevolent way, "Mr. Sayama, I know you

having a hard time getting adjusted, but both Mr. Kawahara and we like your work so far, and we'd like to see you keep on." He was fair-minded to have even hired Mr. Kawahara at such a high position. But I said I didn't think there was a future for me, in my lifestyle. And he said, "Well, you know, I'll tell you this, confidentially, but if you quit here, you gonna be blacklisted, and you will never work on a plantation system." You know, the Big Five [companies] had control [over Hawai'i's economy]. So he was indirectly telling me, "Even if you go back Downtown and you try to get into good firms, you on that list."

WN: Even if it's outside of Castle & Cooke.

ES: I guess so. I mean, I don't know how integrated they were, but he wasn't telling me explicitly, see. So I said, oh, gee, if I'm gonna get into that kind of position, I better think twice. But I said, well, I can go.

Because when I graduated, the social service department in UH used to look after me because (chuckles) as I told you, they got for me that scholarship, Prince Fushimi scholarship. And then they got for me that WPA kind [of] job on the farm, like that. So when I graduated, I guess they had a inkling of how the niseis were being treated, as far as leads to good positions. I forgot her name, but she told me, "Ey, you're real good in chemistry, so you want to go work for Honolulu Gas [Company]."

And I know later on, two or three (classes below me), Chinese fellow, he went to work and he became a good chemist over there. But I turned it down.

WN: Why?

ES: Well, I took sugar tech, why should I be chemist for [Honolulu] Gas? I gotta follow my conviction that why I took sugar tech was to be a good sugar technologist. And those days, it [UH sugar technology department] was acclaimed as one of the best in the world.

I remember later, maybe I should've gone to Taiwan or something. Hung Wai Ching was the secretary for Nu'uanu Y. And he went to Atherton House, I guess, UH. Had a YMCA over there. And then before that, he was the first one gave me a job at Nu'uanu Y, you know. Before I went Waialua, I worked [there] as a janitor [in 1937].

WN: This is Hung Wai or Hung Wo?

ES: Hung Wai.

WN: Hung Wai Ching.

ES: Yeah. Hung Wo was good in sugar and all that, agriculture. Hung Wai was, I think, engineering [and real estate]. So Hung Wai was surprised. I used to go Nu'uanu Y every day with my gang. And I was one class above them. But I was still with that group, my age level. You know, I told you about the skipping grades. And when I went, he said, "How come you not working?" And I told him about my plight, and he said, "Ah, until you get a job, go help Mr. Arakawa, the janitor."

So I started off as a janitor, you know. But he [Hung Wai Ching] was really nice to me. And during the war, he was nice to the niseis. So I never forget him. So I guess if I had gone out

someplace and then started, I might have amounted to something, but didn't have the chance. And when I came back [from Waialua], I told Nu'uanu Y people, I quit [Waialua], you know. And they said, "Gee, why you want to do that?"

I didn't want to give out personal reasons, you know. But I said, "I had my own reasons."

And they said, "Oh, you want to sell insurance?" He tells me.

WN: This is all prior to Waialua?

ES: No, after Waialua.

WN: After Waialua.

ES: Yeah.

WN: Oh, okay.

ES: You know, I quit Waialua, so I gotta start over, what to do, you know. And Mr. [Umematsu] Watada used to be (at Nu'uanu YMCA) there. Later he was selling insurance, after he retired, I think he sold for Brainard & Black. Mr. Watada (said to me), "Ey, go sell insurance."

I said, "No, I don't want to be salesman." (Chuckles)

And so, I think that's when I took up a course in real estate. I went Honolulu Business College. And there was a—I forgot his name, Miyashiro or something. Anyway, I used to know him from before and I didn't want to take any old (course), so I was going to take bookkeeping. But he told me, "Ey, you know, real estate gonna be a good field, so why don't you take that up?"

So I started taking that up. During the time I was working Nu'uanu Y like that, I took civil service exam. And I got a call from Hickam Field. They were looking for surveyors. So I said, "Oh yeah, I might as well go (there) and then take night course at Honolulu Business College," you know, for the real estate. Because I started, I didn't want to drop it. So that's what I did. And I started working. . . . This is what, [November] 1938.

WN: How did you find out about the job?

ES: Hickam Field?

WN: Yeah.

ES: Oh, go Downtown, federal building and take civil service test. I used to take any kind of test. (Chuckles)

WN: As a surveyor, when you got there, were there a lot of niseis there?

ES: Well, in that group, I worked with none. My chief of party was a Kam[ehameha] School graduate. And we used to call ourselves chain man and transit man and all that. Transit man, one was Joe Kamakahi. He was Hawaiian, and I think he—Kam School too. Kam School was

good trade school kind type, before, you know. And Teddy Cordez—chee, I don't know. He might have been Kam School too, because . . .

WN: Who's this?

ES: Teddy Cordez. C-O-R-D-E-Z, or something. And I was the fourth guy, you know. But there was two survey groups, and other group leader was nisei, but he graduated in engineering, so he was chief of party over there. So as far as discrimination, there was none, I think. But I wasn't conscious of that kind of stuff at that time. But it was just a matter of taking civil service test and then, oh, sometimes, if you have connections and they know about one test coming out, they will let you know. But in my case, I just went down the office and go look for whatever test was offered. In fact, one time, I even took, later on, post office [i.e., U.S. Postal Service examination]. 'Cause lot of niseis were going in the post office work, see. Because no discrimination, you know, postal clerk. And I had taken that test. And in fact, during the war, when I was working Punahou [School, for the U.S. Engineer Department, later known as U.S. Army Corps of Engineers], I got a call.

Oh, we had to go, I think, McKinley High School, big auditorium. All of us taking test, see. And I told my—not my immediate boss, but the higher boss, I said, "Ey, I get this postal service (offer) and [with] engineering, I don't know if I can go too far," because (my section) had mostly, I would say, half and half local fellows, and then from Mainland, see. And all our bosses were *Haoles* anyway. So I said, "I think I go work post office." Because [collecting] stamps was my hobby already, you know.

So I figure if I work there, I can get all kind of—but the big boss [U.S. Engineer Department] said, "If you want to, I can release you, but they really could tie us down."

WN: This is when now, when was this?

ES: During the war.

WN: During the war? You didn't have to stay in your job?

ES: Well, that's what he told me.

WN: Oh.

ES: "But if you really want to go, we'll release you." Because I wasn't good engineer or anything, I was just a draftsman, you know. But he said, "You know, you not called for the draft because we gave you deferment. You're deferred because you were in war[-related] work. If you go to the post office, I don't think the post office can give you that same deferment."

So I said, "Oh, I'll stick with you."

(Laughter)

ES: And that was a good [decision], you know. I think I got further in with the Engineers, instead of at the post office. I might have climbed quite a bit in post office, but you just stay there, stay put. Whereas I went all over the world with the [U.S. Engineer Department].

WN: Were there other people in your situation too, during the war, were in this defense-related job, and then got offers to work somewhere else, but were sort of frozen?

ES: I think most of us were frozen. Well, wherever you want to go work, you have to think of two things: to get away from the draft. Lot of us had our name on that register already. And so, as the war progressed, they picked you one by one. And so that was one consideration. And the other thing was if you work for the federal [government], then at least for the duration [of the war], you set. Because the corps of engineers was into everything. You know, they were calling constructors from the Mainland and local contractors too. And so, it's not just like a small engineering firm. Corps of engineers used to be only interested in harbors and rivers. But now, it became, you know, war industry. And they were controlling. [Fort] Shafter had their own engineering department, but most of the construction were given to the corps of engineers. Of course, every army unit have engineers, but they were war-type engineers, and not this civilian construction. So we had supervision of everything. So even if you quit, then you would try to get work, you still working indirectly for the corps of engineers. That's the feeling you have, so why quit, when you have the direct tie-in with the federal government, and you're protected? And you don't know how long the war gonna last. So that's the decision, I think, lot of us made. So we stuck together.

WN: So when you first started [working at Hickam Field for the U.S. Army Air Corps Quartermaster Department as a surveyor], before the war started in 1938, did you have any inkling of that's what was gonna happen? You know, if I join the federal government, maybe I won't have to get drafted, or something like that.

ES: No, I didn't.

WN: Did that go through your mind?

ES: No. 'Cause we were too young to know the ramification of international relationship. Maybe the government, you know, the fact that they built Hickam Field [in 1938] was in preparation for the war. But we were too young to realize things. You know, in hindsight, yeah, I think it was that. See, because when Hickam Field was started, we were working for the [U.S. Army Air] Corps Quartermaster [Department]. Quartermaster in the army, you think of supply, yeah?

WN: Yeah.

ES: Uniform and this and that. But they were doing it and the [U.S.] Air Force didn't have much of a organization at that time. [Hickam Field, built in 1938, was under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Air Corps.]

WN: This is in—when you first started.

ES: Yeah.

WN: When you first started, your title was—you were with the [U.S. Army Air Corps] Quartermaster [Department, 1938-41]?

ES: Right. So that shows even the government didn't think much of it. But later on, after working couple of years at Hickam Field, they said corps of engineers gonna take over construction of

Hickam Field. So you quartermaster, and you have seniority, so you go to [Fort] Shafter. And I was moved to Shafter. And the construction we were doing was primarily building warehouses so the quartermaster can keep their supply. And that type of quartermaster you became. And the corps of engineers started building, of course, primarily for the war effort. And they hurried it up to build that Hickam Field, because war was in, you know . . .

WN: Imminent.

ES: Yeah, imminent. And the intelligence service, they got all the data. So they know what they were doing. And sure enough, before we can even prepare ourselves, bang, they hit us on December 7. And so, few days after that, us guys down Shafter (chuckles), we were transferred back to corps of engineers. Quartermaster, they were *pau*, they weren't gonna fool around with construction anymore. [On December 8, 1941, all army construction and real estate matters were transferred from the U.S. Army Air Corps Quartermaster Department to the U.S. Engineer Department.]

WN: So, '38, you were—it wasn't considered part of the corps of engineers when you first started?

ES: No, I started at Construction Quartermaster. And then in '41, right after the war [started], I became part of the engineers. And then from Shafter, I went to [U.S. Engineer Department headquarters at Alexander] Young Hotel.

WN: Okay, now, so when you first started [working for the federal government]—let's start from '38, what was your first job?

ES: Engineering aide [for the U.S. Army Air Corps Quartermaster Department at Hickam Field]. You know, when they look in the transit, and you see somebody holding the pole, I was the guy. But as I said, had Joe Kamakahi, and Teddy Cordez and myself. And Tai Hoi Lau, yeah. I was the youngest, and you know, the city jack, so I carry their lunches.

(Laughter)

ES: You know, you [work with] that kind, poles and stakes, carry that kind of stuff. And then we needed the high pole—you see, from Hickam Field to Fort Kam[ehameha] to our airport was cane field, those days. You try walk through the cane field with high pole like that. You cannot go sideways, you gotta hold 'em, you know. So I used to get all the dirty job, I was the lowest guy. Well, in anything, when you go in, you gotta learn from the bottom. And that's what I was doing. Although, educationwise, I had more than the whole crew there. Even the chief, he was a Kam[ehameha] School graduate. So, you know, as part of our course up University [of Hawai'i], we had to make a survey of the campus, our surveying class. So I knew how to use that instrument and then interpret that and make a drawing. So educationalwise, I had, but I didn't have the practical knowledge. And then, I was about the last to be picked, so (chuckles) started from the bottom, so to speak.

WN: How did the pay differ from . . .

ES: Waialua?

WN: Yeah.

ES: Oh, gee, I don't know. I don't remember much about Waialua money. But I know when I went to Hickam Field, GS2, \$102, starting pay. So that I never forget, because that's my first, you know.

WN: Hundred two a month?

ES: Yeah. And of course, that was considered good already to get \$100. And I was living with my folks yet, so that was ample. When the civil service thing comes out, you could see the different exam for different position, and you could see from GS2, it starts going all the way. But we were considered sub-professionals, see, SP2, sub-professional. When you get into the P, which is professional, then the pay became better. So I said, "Well, at least I know I have a future ahead of me." Since I like math and working there was all right, I said, "Well, I gonna try." And after that I had no choice, as I told you. I had a choice for post office, but I turned it down.

WN: So between '38 and '41, when the war started, you did that, you were the rod man?

ES: Yeah. Rod man or chain man. But then, as I said, I had lot of drafting experience, so once in a while, if the office in the drafting room, they lack people, they used to ask me to work in there. And then I became more proficient there, because manual labor was not for me. You know, that kind, with the fingers and hand, and math, interpreting degrees and angles like that, I was okay. So I did most work in the office. An engineering aide can mean any kind of aide for engineers, see. So whether it be for surveyor or for engineer, or draftsman, they can move you around, so they put me in the office. And I think that was a lucky move for me, because if I had stayed out on the field, the highest I could have gone was chief of party. But the way it turned out, step by step, after the long years, I finally got myself converted into engineer rating, because every summer we used to have university professors from UH come over and work for us during the summer. This is way later, see. And my engineering division chief was Jake Park, I think. He was an architect, and he told the professor, "Ey, this boy,"—they used to call me Sammy, Sayama was hard—"Sammy, he's been working with us kinda long time, and he was college graduate, can't he be put in a engineering group category?"

And this professor was nice enough, he went back and he saw all my record at university. He said, "Yeah, I think he has enough background with the experience and the education, he can be put in the professional group."

So I filled in all kind of paper and I submitted to the civil service, and they gave me a P rating. So after that, was better for me, because every time there was an opening, I can qualify, you know. And then, every time they want to give me a raise, on the P rating, you get better pay, see. So that was really lucky for me, and couple of people look after my welfare. (Chuckles)

WN: Okay, before we get into your moving over to the [U.S.] Engineer [Department] at Alexander Young Hotel, what I want to do is just ask you or talk to you about what you were doing the day that Pearl Harbor was bombed.

ES: Oh.

WN: Can you describe that day for me?

ES: Yeah. Early, when that excitement came up, I think I was listening to the radio to find out what the hell's going on, because, you know, you hear all that bombing noise and all that, but you don't know what's happening. So I turned to the radio, and then that's when I found out. I forgot his name, he said that this is the real McCoy, or whatever.

WN: Webley Edwards.

ES: Yeah. But . . .

WN: Did you hear sounds, noises?

ES: Oh yeah. But the one that really brought it to a climax, was the one, the projectile that fell on Kukui Street. See, we were living right on the corner there.

WN: Nu'uanu and Kukui?

ES: Yeah. That thing [i.e., U.S. anti-aircraft projectile] fell, and of course, we ran right to the window, living on the second floor, and I saw bodies on the sidewalk. I guess they got blown out, when, you know, the explosion. And then the ambulance started to come, see. So then I told my parents, "Ey, I don't think we should stay in the city. We better go someplace."

We didn't have car or anything, and my mother used to work for the Robinson family up Nu'uanu, and her cousin was the cook. And she had a domestic help's quarters, (away) from the main building. So she said, "Oh, let's go there. So get your stuff, and hurry up. Get pajama and things like that." We didn't know how long we were gonna stay and what's gonna happen, see. But the idea was to get away from the city. So I don't even remember how we went, whether we had a bus or walk up or what, but you know, from Kukui to the [O'ahu] Cemetery, wasn't that bad. Of course, kinda uphill, yeah, after you pass Kawānanakoa School. But I was so used to with that area, anyway. So we stayed overnight with the lady. We slept over there.

WN: What went through your mind when you saw the projectile and the bodies out there?

ES: Oh, I thought Japan was gonna start bombing the whole place up. Oh, before that too, on Nu'uanu Street, where Foster [Botanic] Gardens is now, used to be a [Hawai'i] Chūō Gakuin, Japanese[-language] school. And the kids had Sunday school there. And my neighbors, you know, my future wife had three younger sisters, I think some of them were going Sunday school. And they came home, and said, oh, some of their friends got hurt and were taken to hospital. So that educated you more that, oh, this is a something real going on. Although later on, we read in the paper, it was our own [U.S.] unexploded projectile that came down all over the city. Because the bombing was strictly military, you know. But you couldn't tell in that atmosphere, differentiate that. So we took it for granted, you know. 'Cause really scared. And my wife's folks evacuated too. They went further up on Old Pali Road, because their good friend was working—the husband and wife was working as chauffeur and maid for the Cooke family up Old Pali Road. And so we got separated that time. But the next day was funny too, right after that. Can I go to next day?

WN: Sure, sure.

ES: 'Cause that day, you know, that's it. We stayed up there just scared.

WN: What did you take with you when you went up?

ES: I don't recall. It was mostly my parents doing. And then, since we gonna stay with a good friend, you know, we figure everything there. So that kind of detail, I don't remember. After we got there, what we did, I don't know. I guess mostly listen to radio. (Chuckles) And I don't even know if we talked to the Robinson family. Because Japanese and *Haoles*, yeah, you know what I mean? You don't feel right, too, when they tell you Japan is attacking, you know. Because I know my parents them used to collect the silvery [foil] paper, you know, wrapped around the pack of cigarettes like that. Anything, they used to send Japan, because our parents are from Japan. They didn't know they were gonna fight America. And then they used to be pro-Japanese. And so I don't know how the Robinsons felt against us, you know. But we just stayed put in the house. And listened to the radio.

And the following morning [December 8], got up. They said, oh, they were calling all civil service and federal workers, report to your post.

WN: They didn't call you that day [December 7]?

ES: I don't know if they called. I don't have phone at home, and they don't know where to contact me. So by radio, they used to tell, oh, Pearl Harbor [Naval Shipyard] employees all go Pearl Harbor, like that. They may have, but I wasn't listening, you know. All my thought was get away with my folks to safety. So next morning I told my parents, "Oh, I gonna report for work."

'Cause prior to that, they had given us identification cards and whatnot already, you know. The army was aware of something coming up. So I had the ID card, and I went. And right there, by that cemetery, there's a bus stop. And I went out and there were several people, official-looking people, they said, "Where you going?"

I said, "Oh, I'm going to work."

"Where?"

"Fort Shafter."

WN: This is—you're talking about O'ahu Cemetery?

ES: Yeah.

WN: Okay.

ES: See, the Robinson family—you know the Hawaiian mausoleum?

WN: Yeah, Royal Mausoleum.

ES: And then, Robinson family, and came the cemetery. So the Robinson . . .

WN: So [the corner of] Nu'uauu [Avenue] and Judd [Street]?

ES: Yeah.

WN: Okay. That's where you were waiting for the bus.

ES: Yeah, around there. I think there was another bus stop above Nu'uau and Judd. But anyway, that area, I don't know which one I went to. But then they were stopping people and checking up, where you going and what you gonna do, and all that. I guess they were looking for help, you know. And I said, "Oh, you know, I work for the corps of engineers. As far as Hickam Field, all that utilities like that, we laid out. I know where it is because I had to hold flag over all these things, see. And I had to go in the drafting room and draw, lay out the utility system."

So he said, "Oh, okay, go then."

But when I went on the bus, either from the bus or outside, I noticed plenty people working in the cemetery. And I think they had a trench digger or something, anyway, equipment. And they needed plenty people to dig trenches. Bodies were being brought to that area. You know, I hear later on, on Judd Street—before that, I think, somebody was going to work or something, and his car got hit or something on Judd Street. [Three civilians on their way to work at Pearl Harbor were killed when their car was struck by a projectile on Judd Street.] But anyway, I went to Shafter.

WN: How long did it take you, about, you know . . .

ES: I don't . . .

WN: Was there traffic, lot of traffic?

ES: I don't recall. But I know I got there, because I was [then] sent home. And the reason being that when I got to that gate, I showed my pass, but he [sentry] said, "If I were you, go home."

And I said, "For what?"

He said, "Change clothes."

And I had [on] blue, you know. He said they got rumors that Japanese parachuters in blue were coming down on St. Louis Heights and they didn't know where, but that was the rumor. So you had the face of a Japanese (chuckles), and you in blue. Said, you know, "Our soldiers might get trigger-happy, you walk around in Fort Shafter."

So I went home, changed clothes and went back to work.

WN: So you got back on the bus and went back home.

ES: Yeah.

WN: Change clothes, came back.

ES: I don't think they furnish us transportation or anything.

(Laughter)

ES: They needed the cars for all important stuff. And then later on, I think was Mr. [Harry] Makino, he was working with us at [Fort] Shafter. Anyway, few of the higher-grade engineers were visited by the intelligence or whatever, and then questioned and then I think they spent overnight, police station or someplace. But I was real low on that organization, so, you know, I don't have vital information that I could have supplied to the. . . . See, like Mr. Makino, he used to work on all the airplane hangars and all, he was the structural engineer. So he knew all the layout stuff. So I think he was questioned.

WN: Did he come back to work?

ES: Yeah, I think he did come back. And Ray Uyeno was the same thing. Oh, he was the other chief of party, Uyeno. And he worked with the corps of engineers way later too. Because I still remember him. But I used to work with him on the outside jobs too, when we were students at university.

WN: Let me turn the tape over.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Okay, so we were still talking about that day [December 8, 1941].

ES: Yeah.

WN: When you went to work, do you remember what you had to do or . . .

ES: No, nothing like that. I don't remember.

WN: Was there a lot of confusion at Shafter?

ES: Yeah. One thing I remember is that, medical clinics inside there, they had too many bodies. You know, they were just stacking 'em up. That's what, all kind [of] rumors come out. I didn't actually go and look at it but, you know. So then, I thought to myself, oh yeah, maybe that's why they digging the graves up O'ahu Cemetery. But that's one thing stuck in my mind. But besides that, I don't know what was going on at Fort Shafter.

WN: Did you feel different because you're Japanese? Did you feel that you have to act differently?

ES: Well, subconsciously I must have. When they sent me home to change clothes, there's the first step. And then, I don't know if was at that time or later on, we had this *bangō*, you know, ID, with a black band around. So, we were conscious of that, you know, discrimination already.

WN: Oh, just Japanese had that?

ES: Yeah, yeah. Or third-country nationals, you know. But mostly Japanese, see. And to begin with, you was conscious of that because when I was taking civil service test, even if you took the test, I don't think we could have qualified for Pearl Harbor work. The navy won't hire us. So I know I had that kind of things in mind, but that day, as far as being treated this and that, I had no concept. 'Cause as I said, we were small potatoes. If you were a influential, yeah, then. . . . You know, like the kind [of] *bon-san* and [Japanese-language] schoolteachers, all got taken. Of course, I didn't know at that time, you know. But didn't occur to me at all, because all my family is small. And—oh, but my stepfather [Matsuki Tamura] got fired, though.

WN: Yeah?

ES: He was working [for] Pacific Cable. And you know, later on, I read the story about that cable from [General George] Marshall. They sent 'em out through the cable, because all the wires were tied up. And the Pacific Cable guy *wen* deliver 'em about twelve o'clock that day, or something, after the war had started, you know. But my stepfather was an alien, so he was . . .

WN: What was he doing at Pacific Cable?

ES: General office work. And clean up and go post office, go get the stamps and, you know, the thing that come up, they mail 'em and, of course, try to call 'em and they confirmation through the mail. Things of that nature, I think. But I didn't talk too much about, "Ey, what you doing?"

(Laughter)

ES: Especially stepfather, you know. But one thing I learned from him was he used to buy first-day covers, and he used to buy stamps, and I learned philatelic stuff from him. And which window to go to get the special service for the kind [of] certain stamps, like that.

WN: So the—Mr. Makino, the people at Shafter, were they issei or nisei?

ES: Nisei.

WN: They were nisei.

ES: Yeah.

WN: Were there any aliens working at Fort Shafter?

ES: Chee, that, I don't think so. Because you have to be a citizen to get the civil service status.

WN: I see.

ES: Yeah. Of course, lot of the kind [of] menial job—they may work for army personnel as yardboy or cook or something, at home, like that. But as far as civil service, I don't think so. I don't recall anyway. All the Japanese I knew was civil service status. Like Uyeno and Makino, and Wynn Nakamura, he was electrical. But he came later, I think.

WN: So the family that lost their lives, that family at the saimin stand. Did you know them at all?

[On December 7, 1941, a U.S. anti-aircraft shell exploded on the Cherry Blossom restaurant located on the corner of Nu'uaniu Avenue and Kukui Street. Kikuyo Hirasaki, whose mother owned the restaurant, lost her husband and three young children in the blast, which claimed a total of twelve lives. Mrs. Hirasaki was seriously injured.]

ES: No, I didn't know them. I knew that there was a saimin stand there. But I didn't frequent that place, because my wife's parents had a saimin stand on the 'Ewa side of Kukui Street too, see. On the same street, you know. And the only reason why I remember that place is I used to go to Nu'uaniu YMCA, and I have to walk along that street, Kukui Street, and then you hit Fort Street, and you go up to Vineyard, the corner was Nu'uaniu YMCA. So I passed the place all the time, but I never took notice, you know, except I noticed people eating saimin there.

WN: How badly was the building damaged?

ES: Well, to me, the damage wasn't too big, you know, but my focus of attention was only on the bodies. And all the shattered tables and chairs and all that. Of course, reading that article [*The Honolulu Advertiser*, November 26, 1991], it said it hit towards the kitchen, or something, and the force of the explosion forced everything out. And the entrance was kind of big, so that's the easiest way the force to go out. So I notice that, see. You just saw the bodies and people crowding and then ambulance coming and then we said, "Oh, let's run away."

So, no time to think about that kind. If that was our own, my own house, I would say, "Oh, what was broken." You know, radio, TV, or whatever, but you can't recall things like that.

WN: Was there a fire?

ES: I noticed smoke, yeah. But whether there was fire, and it spread or not, I don't recall at all, because we just discussed and took off. So I didn't even see the aftermath at all. And even when I came back, like that, to live back in the same house, I don't recall going over there, you know. Well, right off the bat, you had the blackout. You cannot be roaming any old place. So all you did was go to work and come home, and stay home. Put the black curtain down and if you use the light, you gotta make sure nothing leaked out. You were really confined.

WN: How long were you at the Robinsons?

ES: Oh, only that night [December 7].

WN: Oh, oh. So after that, you folks went back?

ES: Yeah, back to the house. Because everything quieted down, and then, when you listen to the radio, whatever news they tell you, all they tell you is maybe the aircraft carriers and bombers are out, but nothing is happening, so stay in your home and then, you know, blackout. And listen to the radio for further instructions. That's about all. I don't know if my parents had shortwave or what, but I know lot of the older Japanese used to listen to shortwave to find out if Japan was broadcasting anything. But soon, thereafter, they made everybody, aliens anyway, turn in their radio, and they took 'em away.

WN: So you folks turned in yours?

ES: Yeah, I think my parents did. Maybe they cut off the shortwave part and then gave it back to us. That part I don't know. But that's the only way we gonna find out. Communication, you know. And with martial law on, whatever law the military is giving, they give it to the radio station and they would, in turn, give it to us. And no more Japanese[-language] newspaper for us. That was stopped. And we don't subscribe to American paper. And as I said, after work, I used to go Nu'uanu Y, read newspaper like that, take a bath, you know. But all that was out. You just stay put at home and to take a bath, you get that bucket and you put 'em on the stove, and heat the water and put 'em in the basin and wash up. So was strictly confined to the house.

WN: Were there block wardens around there?

ES: I think there was, yeah. But I know one time I got caught by a policeman, though. He said my—I had a window, fronting Nu'uanu Street, and I think the upper part was open for air. We had this black cloth on the window and when you pull it up, then it automatically sealed off. But I think it was open and a light was going out. Knocking at the door, and my folks said, "Ey, you better go out already."

Open the door, I look at the guy, policeman. "Who stay in there?"

I said, "I am."

He said, "You know over there, the light is coming out strong, you know."

So I went in, I said, "Oh yeah, I forgot to push it all the way up." And I must have been reading something, you know, doing something. Then I look at him. I said, "Ey, you Moke, yeah?"

He said, "How come you know me?"

I said, "University, you used to play basketball, and I used to go gym."

And his name was Ernest Moses. So he said, "Oh yeah, yeah. You went UH?"

I said, "Yeah."

Then, he said, "Oh, okay, then pull 'em up, and then be sure from now on, now, I don't want to report you." He let me go.

But if I didn't know the guy, I think I would have been thrown in the slammer or at least be fined. But that was one experience I had with the law, during that blackout. But happened to be my friend, that's why—not friend, but I knew him, you know. I follow sports up university, see. (Chuckles) That was it. But was a really scary life, though, those days. You don't know what gonna happen. 'Cause if they can sneak in like that, I said, gee, they can do practically anything, you know.

Later on, well, this is real later on—I got called in and asked by military intelligence. I got pulled in because of my [stamp] cover activities and my letters, you know. The guy, he had a dossier on me, because he knew I had a brother in Japan, and . . .

WN: When was this now?

ES: Later on . . .

WN: During the war?

ES: Yeah, during the war. 'Cause he asked me, "If my brother came on the submarine, what would you do to help him?"

I said, "First of all, I don't know how my brother look." I said, "We were separated when we were kids. You know, seven and five years old. And the last I heard, he was in Manchuria."

Then, oh, they ask all kind of questions, though.

WN: This is what, navy intelligence?

ES: Army, I think.

WN: Army. They called you in.

ES: Yeah. And they were headquartered at the Dillingham Building on Bishop Street. That whole building was [used for] intelligence, I think. And at first, I don't know why they picking on me, see. Then it dawned on me, you know. [They] said, "You've been corresponding with lot of military people, and sending out covers, and asking for APO [army post office] and navy cancellations. Why do you need that for? Unless you trying to get spy data."

I said, "Oh, that's our hobby." And I said, "Look, the first anniversary of Pearl Harbor, I made one, in honor of all our men that died." And I told 'em I been doing that ever since.

And I think the part that they really came after me was I tried to send a bunch of envelopes for the 442nd [Regimental Combat Team] to send back to me. Because I had plenty 442 friends in—100th [Battalion] and 442—in Italy. And since I was connected with YMCA, I used to send 'em YMCA newspapers. You know, we used to have once a month, or whatever. So I figure they hungry for information. And they also was lacking in stationery to correspond. That's what I found out from Arthur Komori. I don't know if I told you about the fellow in Australia, who escaped from the Philippines with [General Douglas] MacArthur. He was always asking me for that. So I send it to him, you know. So I said, "Well, I'll go do the same for the other guys and if they write to me, it's a plus for me, because they using the special cover that I had printed." And 442 one, you saw that picture, yeah?

WN: Yeah.

ES: The cover. And I had a space leftover on top, so they could write their signature, and outfit they belong to. And I get censorship stamp too, yeah. And later on, those covers sold pretty good, you know. Because the Mainland guys, they couldn't get that kind. So they wrote to me, and I would send 'em, but at that time, I was sending too many of the 442, I think. So that brought it to a climax, I think, for them to investigate me.

WN: So how did they notify you, that they were investigating you?

ES: Oh they send a what-you-call to the house. Pick you up and then you go.

WN: Yeah. And who questioned you?

ES: Oh, I don't know those guys.

WN: More than one person?

ES: I don't recall. I don't know what the interrogation was, you know. More scared than anything else, yeah. Because, by then, I had heard of internment and all that. So, I didn't want to go Mainland, you know, be interned. Especially my wife [Yaeko Iwamoto Sayama] was—I think she was out by then. I don't know if I told you, but after we got married in July of '42, she was in the hospital until '43. So, I guess by then she was out.

WN: So you got married in '42, right?

ES: Yeah.

WN: Tell me something about your wedding.

ES: (Chuckles) That's another thing, boy. We couldn't gather more than so many people, in a gathering. So we said, "Oh, no need go church wedding, because if we go church, you gotta call people and all that and get permission. We go get justice of peace." And then, of course, we had to work every day. So I said, "Let's go Sunday."

And I call up one of the justice of peace. I know he lived in Pu'unui. And, "Could you get us married?"

He said, "Oh, come over in the morning."

So, we went there in the morning. We didn't want to get too many people involved, so I had my best man, and my wife had her bridesmaid. And the Robinson family, there used to be one yardman, and he had a daughter and the daughter used to go YMCA night school. She was from Japan. And my wife's family, this guy lived with them for a while, and then he moved out, but he was also from Japan. And the two people from Japan wanted to get married too. But they don't know what to do. So I said, "Oh, come with us then." My wife and I will stand in as witness for them. And after they get married, we can get married.

So we had double wedding, practically. You know, we were first a witness for these two, couple. And then we had our own witness. And that's all you need at a wedding, justice of peace [and] a witness. And then we got married there, came home. And we were living next door to each other (chuckles). So we went over to my wife's side for our—I don't know whether it was lunch or dinner though. Oh, lunch, yeah, gotta be lunch. Because we went for honeymoon, my best man had a car, station wagon. Hirota Florist, he used to deliver flowers, so he took us out to Kokokahi, YWCA camp, you know, Kāne'ohe Bay. And there's a bungalow there. I got pictures of that. And we spent our honeymoon there. And there was another incident there. I like go fishing so. . . . There's a long pier, and during the day I caught some 'ōpae. Put 'em in the net and then I tied string, and I put 'em underneath the pier. And next morning—*pāpio* is good fishing early in the morning, depend on the tide. So I told my wife, "Ey, let's go wake up early, go."

"Okay."

And then I took my pole and then we went out. And she was up, holding the pole, and I was underneath the pier, untying that *'ōpae*, the bait. And here comes the sentry with a gun. He say, "What you doing under there?"

"Oh, I'm getting this bait."

So I brought it up and show it to him. And then, "What you gonna do?" This is early in the morning yet, see.

WN: Was it light yet?

ES: I guess it was. Must be, because I don't think I was fooling around with flashlight in a blackout, you know. Good thing my wife was there, too. She said, "We just came out on our honeymoon, and get no place to go, so we going fishing."

And well, "Okay, then. But, you know, don't do the kind [of] suspicious thing as going underneath *da kine* pier, like that."

(Laughter)

ES: "We thought you might be putting something, you know, detonator, or something." You know, they think of anything, see. Trigger-happy, you know, those days.

WN: Were there a lot of sentries around Kokokahi?

ES: I guess so, all the shoreline. Because later on, that morning, Waimānalo, somebody was shot at. I don't know if he was injured or what, but similar situation. Maybe the guy went out fishing too early, you know (chuckles). So that's the two things stand in my mind about my wedding, cannot forget (laughs).

WN: Now, were your parents at the wedding? Your mom, your dad?

ES: Oh, yeah. Well, for the *kaukau*.

WN: Yeah, what about the wedding ceremony?

ES: Nah. No more cars. So only us, and the two Japan people that was getting married. Four of us. And I guess we must have jammed in into the station wagon, one car.

WN: There was a law saying that Japanese cannot—too many Japanese cannot congregate.

ES: No, not only Japanese.

WN: Oh, anybody.

ES: Anybody! If you have more than so many people congregating, you have to have permit from the. . . . You know, just like playing the fireworks at New Year, you gotta get permit, now. Same thing, you gotta go police station. Police is under military anyway. Get permit to do

that, see. So rather than go through all that, hardly anybody knew we got married even.

(Laughter)

ES: And more worse after that, three months later she was in a hospital, for practically a year. So lot of my friends never knew we got married or . . .

(Laughter)

ES: I don't think I got many wedding gifts.

(Laughter)

ES: And plenty people got married during the wartime, my age anyway. Because I went to a fiftieth wedding anniversary [party], last Saturday. This guy was Richard Kato. He was our YMCA friend, so I got invited. And at the table, my YMCA clubmates were all on the same table, so we start discussing, I told them, "Ey, if my wife was living, I would have my fiftieth anniversary this July, you know."

Then the other guy said, "Oh, ours all gonna be next year, fiftieth anniversary."

So lot of people were going steady, decided to get married because of the war, uncertainty, yeah.

WN: I see.

ES: So a lot of my clubmates all got married. So next year, I gotta go plenty fiftieth, golden anniversary [parties], I think. But a lot of 'em, they said they not gonna do it big. But this fellow, he had three kids. And he must have had those three kids early, because at that [party] the grandchildren was going to university already.

(Laughter)

WN: When you say uncertainty, I mean, what, like what went through your mind? You know, why get married at that time?

ES: Well, you going steady and then, I guess, you figure you don't know what's gonna happen, so might as well. Oh, in my case, another reason. Lot of other people were thinking the same thing. My wife's parents had somebody call and ask, say that this guy was interested in my wife[-to-be]. So if they can bring a go-between. You know, Japanese style, yeah. So I think, by then, my in-laws knew that we were going steady, so turn 'em down. But you know Japanese folks, the go-between especially, think, oh, you saying that just to not [get married] you know. So they sort of put us in a spot, see, that it was the real McCoy. So that was one step already, you know. So I guess we figured, we living next door to each other, might as well get married and she only going move one door away. And so didn't change. She gonna work for the parents, at the saimin store, you see. Then I'm going to keep on going work up corps of engineers. And our parents depended on us. My parents, anyway, because he [stepfather] didn't have the job with the cable company anymore. And hard to get job, you know, at that age, with his background. He was working at the Moana Hotel. My mother used to do quite a bit of work, though. She was going catering. But even catering *wen* come

right down because no can hold parties, yeah. And so I was a sole support, you know. In fact, my stepbrother—I forgot what grade he was—but I was sending 'em to school. And I'm the only breadwinner in the family, under that wartime conditions. So if we got married, well, no more expense. I mean, the only thing she wouldn't do was too much household [chores] because my mother was there. But she was too busy helping her parents with the saimin store. But instead she got sick, so more worse. She wasn't with us for one year. And those days, Lē'ahi Hospital, the Japanese looked upon it as like sort of a, not disgrace but, ostracized kind [of] place, you know. Because that was a . . .

WN: TB [Tuberculosis].

ES: . . . consumption, yeah TB. You know, just like leprosy. You know, Japanese, they didn't like TB. So that was another thing that I overcome, you know. Even our friends, lot of our Japanese old folks, they don't want to go *mimai*, because that was that kind of hospital, you know. But I'm glad she went there, because otherwise her life would have been really shortened, I think. Because she got good care, I think was [territory]-run, I'm not too sure—but they had a social worker there. And I told 'em my plight, and then they really reduced that amount I had to pay for her upkeep. You can imagine if I had to pay one year at Queen's Hospital. Well, I would be broke already.

WN: Okay, so you were with the army corps of engineers [i.e., U.S. Engineer Department], so when, what part of the war did they move [the main headquarters] from [Fort] Shafter to Alexander Young Hotel?

ES: Oh well, I don't know when the [U.S. Engineer Department] had taken office in the Young Hotel, because I was at Shafter [with the U.S. Army Air Corps Quartermaster Department]. But when the war broke out, I was moved to Young Hotel [i.e., transferred to the U.S. Engineer Department]. And from Young Hotel to Punahou [School], oh, was practically immediate. [On December 8, 1941, the U.S. Engineer Department occupied Punahou School and established there the headquarters of both the Honolulu Engineer District and the Hawaiian Constructors, a subcontractor.]

WN: Oh, so you weren't at the Young Hotel for very long.

ES: No, no.

WN: Just a matter of days?

ES: Yeah, I guess so.

WN: Did they take over the whole hotel?

ES: No, certain floors. [The Young Hotel roof garden, a popular Honolulu night spot, was also occupied by the U.S. Engineer Department after the outbreak of the war.] On the upper part. But I was hardly there. And then that's another thing I remember—when they moved to Punahou. All us guys, we were reporting to Young Hotel. They took over Punahou, but the move came later, because they gotta fix up Punahou School. So we used to go (chuckles) fool around Downtown. And I'm a town boy, so I know all kind [of] place in there. They gotta bring all the stuff down through the elevator, and then move 'em to Punahou. And they said, "Oh, when the thing go Punahou, make sure you come and help now, because you know

what table belongs to you and all that."

So they gave us leave, see, that morning. (Chuckles) We never go report to Punahou on time. And some of us, we went movies and all kind.

(Laughter)

ES: We got demerit for that day. Just like army, you know, this kind. You know, they call 'em demerit, in the military system. And I think I got deducted pay for that day. That's one of my, black mark on my service career. (Chuckles) We said, "Ah, the way you guys take things down the elevator, we figure going take so many hours." And move and unload and all that, so went movies and then the movies took longer, so we got there too late (chuckles).

WN: How would you get from your house to Punahou?

ES: Bus. Or . . .

WN: Alexander Young Hotel would have been more convenient, yeah.

ES: Oh yeah, just walk down. But I was used to riding bus, because as I said, I never owned a car. And then, I used to finagle a ride from somebody, somewhere. I would make friends and then try get a ride. Especially those days, because blackout, you want to come home early. And we used to work—I don't know, I don't think was eight hours. Maybe we used to work ten hours, I don't know, I forgot already. But I couldn't go visit my wife in the hospital because no more bus system after working hours, blackout, you know, unless you have your own car. And then, even the car, the headlight, you put the certain kind of opening, you know.

WN: Yeah.

ES: So, I couldn't even visit my wife in the hospital. But my boss was good. He was a stamp and cover collector too. He told me, "Oh, go work certain time and then either get comp time, or take annual leave. We let you go." Wednesday afternoon used to be my visiting hour. I used to go visit her. And then Sundays. Because Saturdays, I think, we used to work.

WN: Did the corps take over the entire campus?

ES: Oh yeah, yeah. Everything.

WN: What was it like? I heard there was, you know where they have the night-blooming cereus . . .

ES: Yeah.

WN: . . . they had fences over there?

ES: Oh yeah, barbed wired kind, yeah, entanglement.

WN: Yeah. So what building were you in?

ES: I was in the old schoolhouse.

WN: Oh, Old School Hall?

ES: Yeah. That's the first one built, building [on Punahou campus], you know. That's why I'll always remember that. And I took pictures, mostly inside. So when I donated those pictures to Mrs. [Mary] Judd, she was real happy. She's the archivist at Punahou now, see.

WN: Okay, you folks were office, office work. But were there like bulldozers and tractors and things on the campus?

ES: I think there was, because Hawaiian Constructors were stationed there too. And as I said, before we moved, they built plenty temporary buildings.

WN: Oh, in Punahou?

ES: Oh yeah, on the grounds. And, you know, like Dillingham [Hall], the big hall next to the Old School Hall, where they have shows and whatnot, auditorium. They built a mezzanine floor. And the engineering division had that building too. And we were next to that, see. Our building, the second floor, where we stayed, was the drafting room. The first floor was for equipment for surveyors like that. And then the Dillingham Hall was for all that electrical, sewer, all the different engineers inside there. But I didn't go over [there] too much, because we were strictly limited to our. . . . Young Hotel, you can walk down the whole hotel and you can see everybody, but [at Punahou], we were in separate buildings. And then, lot of the [U.S.] Army people were assigned to us too, you know. Like for engineering, or surveying like that. So we get to know the army guys. And we had a ball team. I used to be a pitcher, so we used to play ball with the army guys.

WN: Where, on the campus?

ES: Campus, yeah. And then all the different [U.S. Engineer Department sites], like Farrington [High] School was called area so-and-so. You know, all the different places at different areas. And they used to come and we used to play ball. So Tommy Kaulukukui was the head, and Joe Kaulukukui was connected too. So I remember Joe Kaulukukui coached us, one time, when we went Moloka'i for play ball. I don't know how we got there, but we went Moloka'i, play ball. And Joe was with us.

WN: So your team was the corps of engineers team?

ES: Well, no. Within the corps of engineers . . .

WN: Oh, I see.

ES: . . . we had plenty teams.

WN: Oh, I see, I see.

ES: As I said, each area had their own teams. And then within Punahou, survey mapping, we had our team. Lot of the engineers, they not the type that play ball.

(Laughter)

ES: Only all rough guys like us got the skill to play ball, see. But all the different units over there had a ball team. And the [Hawaiian] Constructors too, the contractors. 'Cause otherwise, no more diversion. Of course they have other kind [of] diversion, but as far as social kind life, well, I was out already, anyway. I worried only about my wife.

WN: Were there barracks there? People lived over there?

ES: Yeah. That's why they had the post office. Those civilians that lived there, they didn't have APO, see. The military, they get APO. So a post office was erected there. You know the main gate, the corner of Punahou and Wilder, the gate there? You come little bit inside, to the left, they built a temporary building. And war bond building and post office was side by side. So I made good friends with them and (chuckles) I got all those war bond cancellations, like that.

WN: Oh. Was there a sentry in front . . .

ES: Oh yeah.

WN: . . . the gate?

ES: Right. And you know, Punahou got lot of gates, you know, so I think some of the gates were all shut up. Punahou Street gate, yeah. And to the athletic field, and all that. And then they had lot of quarters there too. And of course, not as many buildings as there are now, but you know, they had it all over there.

WN: I read somewhere where that athletic field was used as a nursery or something.

ES: Oh, could be, yeah. Because, you know, nursery, mostly for camouflage. They had to make nets and plants and whatnot, so they can camouflage all that, see. Well, I guess I gave the pictures away. I had pictures of those. Because the corps of engineers had the two editions of historical documents. And when that Punahou archivist interviewed me, I said, "I give you mine, because my family not gonna be interested in my corps of engineers activities." So from 1895, I think, to 1965, was one volume. And then up to 1985, there was another volume, so I donated those.

WN: So what kind of projects were you involved in, during the war, as draftsman with the corps of engineers?

ES: As I told you, earlier, mostly doing tracing work. The engineers would draw plans. We would do the tracing. And then, in the beginning, they couldn't get the cloth, the tracing cloth printed. Nowadays, everything is preprinted, you know. Comes in sheets and all printed. We used to draw the border and then the title block. We used to do, day after day, the same old stuff, you know. Just like we're on a production line, to make plenty of these, for the other division and engineers to do. Mostly we were concerned with the not too complicated drawings, at my level anyway. Field drawings. But lot of these projects were all outlying areas where they had no preliminary plans, you know, the survey data. So you start from scratch. You send the crew out to survey and then you drew the plans and control points, and the contours, so that the engineers can site whatever needed to be sited. If the tree is in the

way, you cut down the trees and all that. But as I told you, the biggest one we did was with, later on, [the building of] Tripler [General] Hospital, 'cause [the area] was mountainous. And that was a mean project, so they cut trails, then they put the markers so that they flew over by helicopter or plane, and they took aerial photos. And then we put that in the—what they call that—you know, you have a screen, you can put the film, and then you can watch.

WN: Oh, infrared?

ES: No, you know, when I say screen, it's just like this TV size, you know. The films will come out and you can see the picture. And those days, I don't think they had infrared and all that, but you could see the contours and because you have all this spot marked out and surveyed, that's all the control points. And from that, you can draw contour lines. Contour lines is, every ten feet, or every five feet, you draw lines so that you can see the gradation. And then you drill hole to see what kind of formation it is, depending on what kind of footing you need and all that. When you go to a mountainside and you have to do it in a rush, you cannot send surveyors out, so we did it aurally.

WN: Why was Tripler [General Hospital] built so late? [Construction began in the fall of 1944 and was completed in 1947.]

ES: Well, I—that I think is a matter of priorities, yeah, as far as money is concerned.

WN: Because it wasn't completed until just when the war was ending already.

ES: I think so, yeah. But . . .

WN: But that was a top priority project?

ES: Well, no, I mean—when I say priority, air fields and all the other things had higher priority. And then, the campaign was moving towards Japan, so you know, no more casualty this side. Except that they don't know where to put 'em [i.e., patients], so they started bringing 'em back to Hawai'i. I don't know what the logistics of those things are but, well, when the war broke out, they sure could have used a . . . That's why before, during the war, I think, all the hospitals were taken over by military. But eventually they had to return those facilities.

WN: Plus, they set up temporary hospitals too, right?

ES: Oh yeah. You know, wooden structures all over the place. But eventually, they had to. And then I guess, that thing dragged on and maybe they saw that Korean War, forthcoming. So the casualties, they gotta take care, you know. And Hawai'i being in the middle of the Pacific, logical place, so I guess Congress was willing to appropriate the money. But they sure taking their time about giving the veterans their hospital, though, in Hawai'i.

WN: I guess one of the top priorities for the corps was the repairing damages caused by the. . .

ES: Oh yeah. Restore Hickam Field, for example. 'Cause the war was in the air already. And we had [aircraft] carriers and all that, so Pearl Harbor [Naval Shipyard workers] work hard like hell and restored lot of those. And then, slow boats from Mainland [would] bring troops down here. They have to have a place to stay. So when lot of troops come in, then you gotta have facilities. So lot of the schools [were] taken over too.

WN: Right.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 22-6-2-92; SIDE ONE

WN: Okay. Let me ask you just a little more questions. This Hawaiian Constructors you were talking about, was that a private firm?

ES: It was private, yeah.

WN: Contracted by the U.S. Engineer [Department].

ES: Right.

WN: And what kind of jobs did they do?

ES: Oh, any construction. You know, temporary facilities, mostly.

WN: But did the corps have their own construction . . .

ES: No, they . . .

WN: . . . going too. Oh, everyone was contracted.

ES: Yeah, contracted mostly. Faster that way. The engineers mostly is for engineering when you go to war. You know, you build temporary bridges, or temporary roads, things of that nature. That's why they have the corps. But this wasn't a battleground. You know, their engineering is on the battlefield. But this became sort of a staging. . . . Too bad I don't have that book, that corps of engineer book. They have it written out like that. [Erwin N. Thompson, *Pacific Ocean Engineers: History of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the Pacific, 1905-1980.*]

WN: I'll look at it.

ES: And in fact, was interesting, you know, one of the chief of engineers over here was [Albert K. B.] Lyman. Hawaiian ancestry, you know. He was a colonel. Real interesting in that respect, so lot of the Hawaiians said, "How come this Hawaiian guy go take over Punahou School by mistake?"

They don't know if it's a mistake or real, see. [For a semi-historical account of the circumstances behind the U.S. Engineer Department's occupation of Punahou School on December 8, 1941, see Russ Apple's article, "Army Occupation of Punahou," in *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, July 8, 1985, p. A-13.]

WN: Yeah, you don't know the real story.

ES: Yeah, all kind of speculation. Because University of Hawai'i and Punahou, so near to each other to begin with. And if you go that way [i.e., toward University of Hawai'i], you gotta

pass there [Punahou]. And then get "College of Hawai'i," or college of something.

WN: "O'ahu College" [the former name of Punahou School].

ES: O'ahu, yeah. See so, you would think that's the university, yeah? [Apple's article suggests that the U.S. Army mistakenly occupied Punahou School instead of the University of Hawai'i, based on a sign on Punahou's front gate which read "O'ahu College."]

(Laughter)

ES: And no forewarning, you know, they just break in over there. The caretaker was taken by surprise.

WN: Was it set up like a military base? Was there like stores, PX [post exchange], or anything. . . .

ES: That part I don't know. I don't know if they had one canteen and all that kind [of] stuff. I think they must have. They must have used the [school] cafeteria to feed the civilians and the military, you know. But as far as store kind, I don't know. But since they went so far as to provide post office, they must have had all the facilities there. But as civilians, we're not allowed to patronize that, so.

WN: Oh, I see.

ES: You know, only the military and then the guys with special passes or badge.

WN: So only military [personnel] lived over there?

ES: Yeah.

WN: So you civilians . . .

ES: No.

WN: . . . you didn't get housing.

ES: But the contractors that were contracted to come over to work, may have been given quarters there. And they may have been given cafeteria service. And then like buying war bonds. And postal service had to be separated. Of course, they had their own dispensary.

WN: What about lunch? Where did you eat lunch?

ES: Oh, I used to bring lunch. Eat in the same room. (Laughs) 'Cause work, work, work, those days, you know. You didn't have carefree kind. I don't know what the hours were, but, you know, we used to all bring our own lunch. And you don't go outside, and drive off for lunch hour like that. And no more any kind of drive-ins or fast-food places like that. Anyway, lunch, you know, so easy to bring from home. And then, those days, you conserve. You not gonna spend. So, you try to get by with a minimum. In fact, one guy I know, I used to admire him, boy. When we were down Shafter, every day he eat fruits, you know.

WN: Yeah?

ES: Yeah. Mango season, you know, guavas, mango. All kind of—he was not even a vegetarian, he was a fruitarian, if you have a word for something like that. And he used to survive.

WN: You mean—oh, that's all he ate?

ES: Yeah. He believed in fruits. So we used to think how the hell this guy can—I don't know what he does for breakfast and dinner. But lunch, yeah, he only eat fruits. And we had cafeteria already, by the time we went Fort Armstrong, you know. Civilians can go eat in the cafeteria, see. But get all kind of people. (Chuckles)

WN: So besides Tripler, were there other big projects that you were working on?

ES: Well, we used to do all the, what they call temporary construction. Tripler is the only permanent kind.

WN: Oh, you mean, you used to help draw the plans for temporary buildings?

ES: Yeah. But as I said, while in there, most of my work in the early years was in connection with the field maps, you know, to place these temporary construction on. That's why our surveyors was in the first floor and we were above on the second floor. So primarily that type. And then, at Dillingham Hall, where they had the two stories of work there, they had their own draftsmen. The engineers had their own draftsmen to do electrical, or plumbing, or structural, all the different civil categories. They had their own draftsmen. So I didn't get into the technical side too much. I would say, my work, mostly, was a carry on from Hickam Field, from surveying into putting in drawings what the surveyors brought in.

And as I said, in the beginning, we used to mass-produce papers, sheets like that, and tracing cloth, which went to the other engineering offices to use. But they cannot print 'em, so we were the living printers. You know, repetitious stuff. But you need a border and then title blocks. And put in the corps of engineers symbol and all that. And we used to do that kind [of] tedious kind [of] work. I used to be crackerjack. We used to have a template, you put ink in 'em and you just follow *pukas* in this cellophane, for lettering. Not freehand. And then later on, this two-arm kind [of] prong lettering set, we used to use plenty of that. I became really a crackerjack using that. In fact, after they were going to surplus that kind of stuff, I bought some of those equipment and I use that in making my covers. Instead of freehand printing, I use the mechanical. And of course, I had my own mechanical set, because that was given to me by the Robinson family. One of their boys had taken sugar tech, and he passed away, you know, accident. So when I went to the university, and my mother's cousin told 'em I was gonna take sugar tech, they gave me all his stuff. And I still have that drafting set, was given to me, because I couldn't afford to buy one drafting set. Of course, the government would furnish us lot of things, but some of the stuff, you like to use your own personal stuff. So I made good use of that.

So as far as my engineering contribution to the corps, it's minimal (chuckles). But it was a necessity, because the engineers can't draw anything up until we get the ground, yeah. Anything starts with the ground, see. And we have to have the foundation decided. If it's a stream, or road, all that has to be meshed in. So wherever they build, we have to get the surrounding [area] all laid out. And then we give 'em to the engineers, higher engineers, to work out the details. So we're the starting point. But from the [standpoint of the] finished work, it's minimal, because . . .

WN: Did you have strict deadlines?

ES: Oh yeah, we used to work like hell. 'Cause in demand, eh. All the different areas and I guess each military unit wants this, wants that, you know. So like Waimānalo, Bellows Field, like that, I think there was lot of work involved there too, but I don't recall, though. That may have come later, but that area was used for temporary [structures] too. You know, all these things was temporary, you see. Because you don't know how the war is going.

WN: You mean like quonset huts and . . .

ES: Yeah.

WN: That's what you folks did?

ES: Right, right. But just to place the quonset hut, to line 'em up, you know, if it's like this, then you gotta see if you can get a level area with minimum of work. If it's like this, then you have to build a retaining wall and fill 'em up. So, when you make the drawing, you give the engineers an idea of where is the level place and where the utilities are available for electric line and water line and sewer line.

WN: But the actual quonset hut, you know, that's . . .

ES: Yeah, that's . . .

WN: . . . standard, right?

ES: Yeah.

WN: They're all built the same, but then you had to decide where to build it . . .

ES: Yeah.

WN: . . . things like that.

ES: Yeah, those are prefabricated stuffs, see. It goes up fast.

WN: They built all over, right?

ES: Yeah.

WN: They built in parks and things?

ES: Oh yeah. Any kind of place. Where is vacant, and if you don't interfere with the school. But of course, they try to minimize so that kids gotta go to school. . . . Like at McKinley [High School], they planted vegetables and all kind on the grounds. 'Cause you need food, eh. You cannot import from the Mainland, take time. So, vegetable gardens was all over. Vegetable gardens, and then bomb shelters [were built] all over the place.

WN: Did you folks make bomb shelters?

ES: No. (Chuckles) No more yard. We just living in the tenement. And . . .

WN: What about Punahou kids? Where did they go school?

ES: I don't recall, that's why I said if I had that book, it would explain, but they were using certain school facilities, you know. I don't recall. [Punahou School held its classes in private homes and on the University of Hawai'i campus.]

WN: Do you recall seeing any students on the campus . . .

ES: No.

WN: . . . while you folks were working there?

ES: No, not at all.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 22-17-3-92

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Etsuo Sayama (ES)

March 16, 1992

Kapālama Heights, O'ahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Etsuo Sayama on March 16, 1992, at his home in Kapālama Heights, O'ahu. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay, we were talking last time about your experiences with the U.S. Engineer [Department, later known as U.S. Army Corps of Engineers] . . .

ES: Yeah.

WN: . . . and you know, there were a lot of workers from the Mainland that came in . . .

ES: Right, right.

WN: . . . to work at Punahou School also. Were there any problems with a lot of newcomers coming in?

ES: No. We got along fine. 'Cause they youngsters, eh? And I guess, draft age and one of the reason for coming was, you know, (chuckles) to be on the essential war work, so they didn't have to be in the army. And hardly any trouble really. In fact, one of 'em, George Cuevas, was the one that did lot of designing for me for my covers. My immediate supervisor was Mr. Burton. He was the one that really got me interested in covers, too, because he was a stamp and cover collector. And we used to have our own ball team so you get to know each other. And then you don't have places to go, not like working in town, you know, you go in all directions for *kaukau* and all that. We bring our lunch or I think they may have had cafeteria, I don't recall. So we got along fine. In fact, one of our fellows, Coleman Izu, he became a contractor. He's kind of small guy, but he used to be black belt in judo. (Chuckles) When they learn he was a black belt in judo, all the *Haoles* got respect for him.

WN: You know, like the *Haoles* that you were with before, you know, the ones that you went to school with and became top-level plantation people and so forth. And then, you being Japanese, you didn't get the position. And then now when the war came, you're working with *Haoles* and they're doing more or less the same thing as you.

ES: Yeah, yeah. Right.

WN: Was that a different feeling for you? How did that feel?

ES: No, I got used to. Before the war came, I got used to. We'd be working at Hickam Field. That was with all local boys. But when I went to [Fort] Shafter, then I was in sort of a *Haole* environment, so to speak. But that was military, so you take it for whatever it's worth. And when I went there, I didn't feel. . . . Because civil service is you take the test and they grade you and all that. They don't discriminate [against] you for color line, see. That was the big difference. So you don't feel it. Of course, the supervisors were all *Haole* people from the Mainland. Hardly any local promoted to that level. Except one Chinese fellow was comptroller, which was a high position. But, the feeling was entirely gone, you know. And our focus was on---oh, we had to work, work, work. Saturdays and all. And nighttime you don't go out, so. 'Cause we commute, [but] those fellows, I think they rented places. And one thing, we used to help 'em out. Liquor was rationed, so liquor permit—I don't drink, but I get that and I buy liquor for them (chuckles). One of the group I knew rented a house on Pacific Heights, four or five guys live in the same house. (Chuckles) I used to buy liquor for them. So you know, really friendly. So, you know, when you in the same boat, you get more friendly. Not like before the war when we were on separate strata, so to speak.

WN: Was there a housing shortage?

ES: During the war?

WN: Yeah.

ES: I think so. But not like this kind of shortage [i.e., the housing situation today, in 1992]. The only reason why there wasn't a shortage, I think, is people left, too.

WN: Oh, you mean to fight in the war?

ES: Well, in the war, but [many of] the [military] dependent families all went back to the Mainland. They had a chance to go back and they said, "Oh, we not going to get a boat for maybe one month or two, three months, so if you want to go, go back now," and lot of people sold [their homes] cheaply or left it to the real estate [agents] and they went back, 'cause they had families back on the Mainland. So, that created a vacancy. But I wasn't aware of those things, because I had my own home to live, with our parents. But for the Mainland boys, they may have had, but I'm sure the corps [of engineers] had the personnel division helping them out in that respect. Maybe they had a temporary shelter, until they can find a place.

WN: So, in essence then, in the war, it was like maybe upper---higher class *Haoles* with families were moving out and then regular middle-class *Haoles* without families were moving in? Does that sound about. . . .

ES: Well, when you say without families, you talking about single people, yeah? Because all the Hawaiian Constructors that did all the construction was with us, too, at that headquarters at Punahou. And they all came over [from the Mainland], eh? And then of course, they just couldn't sign up and come over. They had to go through civil service, take test and qualification and then they shipped over. Ours [i.e., army corps of engineers] was the more selective kind of people. Professional type, so to speak. So I guess we got a little bit more educated kind. But the contractors was different, you know. All kind of carpenters, cement, plasterers. Of course, the manual labor they got mostly from over here, 'cause you didn't need qualifications. But for the crafts, the skills, I think they imported lots from the

Mainland, because locals [alone] couldn't. And then there was this tension about interning local Japanese. If all the Japanese went, internment, just like the West Coast, the construction here would go down, right down, because the Japanese was the one that skilled, especially in carpentry. And then of course the other kind of crafts too, they were good.

So, the imports from Mainland was in that kind of craft, I think. But as I said, I don't go out in the field, work with them, so I don't have too much idea what happened to them. Only our fellow draftsmen. And the unique thing about us was the downstairs used to be the surveyors, and we were on the second floor, doing what they survey. We transplant that on the paper. The military had surveyors, too, and civilian surveyors, they worked together. That was our, in Punahou School, in what they call the Old School [Hall]. Dillingham Hall, the big one, they put a mezzanine floor over the first floor and then they had two areas for engineers. All the different skills, electrician, sanitary man, estimators, structural engineers, you know, all the different skills were in that building. So, those higher[-level] engineers, I didn't get too much contact. Of course, we were on the bottom of the barrel (chuckles) so to speak. Especially guys like me because I didn't have schooling in engineering. The only engineering I had was I used to like math, so I used to take extra courses. Every time I had an opening I used to take extra courses. And sugar technology, we had to take drafting and surveying and things of that nature. Hydraulics, strength of materials, and then electrical, sewer, like that, I didn't take at all. So all those engineers were in a separate building. So all my contacts were with my fellow draftsmen and then the surveyors downstairs. And then we form a baseball team of our own, see. And we had a good strong team. (Chuckles)

WN: So was it mixed racially?

ES: Yeah. I used to pitch and my catcher was a Chinese fellow. And sometimes, I forgot his name, a *Haole* guy used to catch for me. Only thing, I don't know how much I look like Emperor Hirohito, I [would be] razzed when I'm pitching. "Hey, Hirohito!" (laughs) especially when we get the different---the core of engineers would divide into different areas. So when you challenge different area guys, they don't know us, eh? And then they had King Kong Kelly, or something, good baseball guy came down for recreation. The troops would go and watch and troops play. So sometimes, the GIs, they get carried away and then (chuckles) "Hirohito," you know, razz like that. I know the officers went after that, though.

WN: Were they razzing you for fun or. . . .

ES: Yeah, you know, to distract you so maybe my pitching would deteriorate or something. Especially when they losing.

WN: Was this baseball? Not . . .

ES: Softball.

WN: Softball.

ES: Yeah. What they call twelve-inch [softball]. That's why you play with gloves and everything.

WN: Fast pitch?

ES: Yeah, fast pitch. I didn't have that kind [of] fast kind, but I used to fool 'em with those

change of pace. I don't know if you watch UH baseball, but Billy Blanchette, he don't have fast one, but he use his coco-head, see? That's how I used to pitch, throw 'em off balance, because they like [to hit] home run, eh?

WN: Where did you folks play games?

ES: Right on the field.

WN: Oh, Punahou field?

ES: Yeah, Punahou field.

WN: The front. The field facing Wilder Avenue?

ES: Yeah, that place used to be. Of course they had quonset huts on top, but [there were] certain level [areas] along that palm[-lined] street. Down there was all level. So we used to have field there. In fact, I remember pitching against some of those Asahi players, too.

WN: Yeah?

ES: Yeah. Because all the outside baseball [i.e., Hawai'i Baseball League] is *pau*. I mean, they were working for corps of engineers, like that. Oh, those guys they could hit, though.

WN: Yeah, like who? Do you remember any names?

ES: Shee! I used to. One was Higa, I think. And the other one was jolly guy, good fun guy. He was a good hitter too. But every time I give him slow ball and then throw him off track and then he hit foul ball. And then try pushing one pretty fast one in between, see. But they were too good for me. (Laughs)

WN: So when the war ended in 1945, what do you remember about working over there? How did things change as the war ended? Did you folks help with the winding down of the U.S. Engineer [Department] at Punahou?

ES: Well, insofar as. . . . That's the part I'm kind of hazy. Before the thing actually ended, I think there was pressure from Punahou School, too. They want the school back, see. And the people were going back already, you know, soon as you were more or less seeing that we were going towards Japan. And, of course, when they dropped the bomb [i.e., the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki] it was *pau*. So, the army built right back of the Immigration Station, a three-story building, for the corps of engineers. The corps built for itself.

WN: During the war?

ES: Yeah. And then we moved there [Fort Armstrong]. So we didn't stay in Punahou for that long. We gradually moved out. Because the pressure was there for us to get out. So, I don't know when it [the move] actually took place. But the corps of engineers had one small—back of that used to be Pier 1 or Pier 2, I guess, and then the corps had a small office there with boats and whatnot, because they were inspecting the harbor, like that. So they were strictly there. It's only the war that made the corps of engineers so big. In Hawai'i now. On the

Mainland, it was a different story. But Hawai'i didn't have a corps to start and then when the war broke out, the top general was a army man, so different staff was going to control over here, except for maybe navy. So, the corps of engineers, instead of strictly sticking to rivers and harbors, expanded into construction. And as I told you, I started at Hickam Field under [U.S. Army Air Corps] Quartermaster [Department], but the corps of engineers took over that. So I was shifted to Fort Shafter with the quartermaster. And then when the war really broke out, they took us over and I was too busy with the supply logistics. And maybe the only thing they continued to build until they finished was maybe warehouses to put in their supplies. But that's why in Hawai'i the corps of engineers was the biggest contractor, you know, construction. But then, when we shifted emphasis towards the Orient—occupation forces—the corps of engineers still carried on. Because we were the outer echelon, closest to the Far East, we established district engineers in Korea and Japan and a sub-office in Okinawa. That was the three areas. So that's why eventually I used to go on inspection tours to Okinawa, Korea, and Japan. And then eventually I transferred there because the family wanted to go there too. I was having problem with a place to live in Honolulu. I was living on Nu'uuanu Street and the city took over a big area there and eventually that Kukui Plaza came up. So we had to move out and I had no place to go. So I thought, kill two birds. My family was envious I always taking trips—like a tourist, you know (chuckles), going to the Orient.

WN: This is after the war, already?

ES: Yeah. So, I got myself transferred to the Japan office.

WN: This is in '47?

ES: No, Japan office I went when? In '62.

WN: In '62. But in '47 you. . . . Oh no, in '47 you got out of the engineers temporarily, right?

ES: Oh, yeah. I went to work for. . . . You see, by '47, things quieted down. And even at Fort Armstrong, they were reducing the people.

WN: Fort Armstrong is the place that they built behind the Immigration [Station]?

ES: Yeah.

WN: Oh, I see. Okay.

ES: And we were there. And they were cutting down people, so I figured, no sense staying there, 'cause that's when I had my first child anyway and I didn't send my wife out to work because of her health. So I went to work for this Ben Hayashi [in 1947]. He's a private contractor. And I stayed there for a couple of years [until 1950]. And then, the Honolulu district engineers, while I was in Fort Armstrong—before I left, was turning to an area engineer, not a district anymore, one step below, and was supervised by the San Francisco district because the workload was so small. You need only [few] people to do rivers and harbors, you know. So the military construction was really phasing out. And everybody's going back to the Mainland, even the troops stationed here. Either that, or going forward for occupation in Far East. So the emphasis was work on that side. But it didn't build up that fast. I left because they were phasing down to area engineer. And then when the Korean War start coming up,

that's when they gave the district status back to Hawai'i. And that's when I worked myself back into the grace of the district. First I quit Ben Hayashi and I went to work for the [U.S. Army] Signal Corps down [Fort] Shafter [in 1950].

WN: So you got out of the feds and you got back in, in 1950.

ES: Yeah. I had my connections, I mean, record and all that. And my previous supervisors and whatnot was still with the corps [of engineers], so go see them and they keep me abreast of openings, like that. But in the meantime, there was an opening with the signal corps in Shafter, so I went there. But I stayed there only short period [four months].

WN: Backing up just a little bit. When the war ended, did you notice a big change in how many people were employed? Did it scale down quite a bit, people going back to the Mainland? So when you went from Punahou to Fort Armstrong, it was already kind of winding down.

ES: Yeah, yeah. Even before we went down, lot of people left because as I said, they came overseas to avoid the draft for one thing. And then they were away so long, you know, their home is on the Mainland—all the single fellows. Maybe some got married, but most of them went back because they were counting the days to go back. And they go by contract so, when the contract is expired, they rather go back than renew it because if they renew it, they have to stay another one or two or three years. In terms of years, not in terms of months, see? That's why the exodus was fast.

WN: I see. Did your work change at all after that?

ES: Well, not too much because I didn't get promoted that fast anyway. I think I was stuck as an engineering draftsman. Then they changed it. When I came back to Fort Armstrong again as area engineer, then . . .

WN: In 1950, yeah?

ES: Yeah, '52.

WN: Fifty-two.

ES: Then I got area engineer so I got a promotion. If I go to my 201 file, I can find 'em, but different grade level. And then, I don't know when it took place, but as I said, we used to have this University of Hawai'i professor come work for us and through my education and my experience, I got an engineer's rating. And after that was nice because once you get into the professional field, you know, less competition and then the jump is greater in money.

WN: So from '52 you were at Fort Armstrong as an engineer.

ES: Yeah, engineering aide. And then . . .

WN: And then from '52 on you were engineer for ten years.

ES: Yeah.

WN: Until '62. That's when you went to Japan.

ES: Yeah, yeah. USED [United States Engineer Department] Far East, Japan.

WN: So you brought your whole family over there?

ES: Yeah. And that was a good deal for us, because I didn't have a home here. They kicked us out from Nu'uano and Kukui. I didn't have place to go so we relocated to Japan. And we couldn't get housing right away, so they gave us a housing allotment and they paid our rental for us. And we lived outside until there was opening in what they call Grand Heights. There was a big compound for all the military and the civilian workers for the [U.S.] government. We had housing out there, so we lived there. And then when my office relocated to Camp Zama, then we moved over to another area.

WN: Camp Zama?

ES: Yeah.

WN: Z-A-M-A?

ES: Yeah. That was . . .

WN: Where was that?

ES: It's south of Tokyo.

WN: Is it still around?

ES: Yeah. Oh, Camp Zama is headquarters . . .

WN: Oh yeah, that's right.

ES: . . . for the [U.S.] Army in Japan right now. And they didn't have housing on the base, so they did have a separate housing called Sagami-hara Area Housing. And (chuckles) you know, that's when my big family did me good because they transferred a lot of the military commanders like that to Zama, because the Japan government had to build housing for them at the camp itself. And the leftover, we were given choice, see. And they go by the number of dependents you have. And I had five kids. (Chuckles) So I got the commanding officer's vacated home. The best one in that housing area, because I needed all the bedrooms. So with the bedrooms and all that, the lawn came with it, so I had to keep up the lawn. I can't do that. Our money went far those days. American dollar went to Japanese yen, eh? Big money, see, so I had a yardman and a maid, you know. They don't come every day, but, to help. In fact, I had one massage lady come in once a week. It was a real style there. (Laughs)

WN: Yeah, and your kids were how old by then? Around---were they still young?

ES: Well, some were in high school. In fact two of 'em graduated high school in Japan. The oldest one, Ellen, she went to Lewis & Clark [University]. They either flew her or boat, whatever was available, all the way to school on the Mainland. So I didn't send 'em back here [Hawai'i], I sent 'em to Mainland. And those are all non-taxable amenities, you know. So you don't declare tax on those things. So was a big break for me. That's why we went for two-year contract, we extended it to five years. Three more years because we were getting all

the breaks. And saving money to come back here.

WN: In '67. And then from '67 what happened?

ES: We came back here because otherwise I would have lost my job over here. Because five years was the maximum you can go overseas. And if you don't come back you don't have retention rights to your previous position.

WN: So how did you feel about coming back?

ES: Well, in fact, I didn't care to come back. I wanted to go---the corps [of engineers] opened up in Italy and in Germany, so I wanted to make a around-the-world circuit with the corps. But they didn't have my kind of position in Italy. Some guys went, you know. Lower classification people, they went to Italy. And some of the fellows that I hired from Hawai'i---lower classification---he eventually went to Germany---Frankfurt. But it just didn't happen because I became an engineer, eh? So you don't have too many of that kind of position. So I couldn't get the vacancy.

So I came back and I was going into the travel industry---travel business, because my friend had a travel industry, Hawai'i Travel. And my wife started to work part-time with him. So we used to take tours out on summer vacations. I would sign up for one month's leave. That's one thing good about working for government, you can sign up in advance. So I used to take tour groups out to [Mainland], Canada, come down, all the way down to Mexico and come back. Used to be two to three weeks' tour. And then in the autumn we used to charter one whole plane and take one whole group, whole planeload to [Las] Vegas. We initiated all that kind, long ago, you know. And my friend is still in that business. Lot of these things we kind of pioneered long time ago. When my summer tour came big, instead of sending my kids to Hawaiian Pine[apple Company] like that---cannery, summer work, I had my second bus load and I made them my assistant tour leaders. And they getting paid, eh? And then they traveling and they getting to see America. So, that's how I used to do.

Then, my son graduated Yale [University], one year ahead, so he said he wanted to study aikido in Japan. And my third daughter graduated TIM [Travel Industry Management], UH. She wanted to go Japan and learn hotel and the language. When I was first in Japan, I used to teach one fellow. His father used to have a hotel in Hiroshima. Near Fukuyama anyway. And we became good friends with him and he said, "Any time your daughters want to learn those things, send 'em to my hotel." So I sent Sandy over there. But if I went with them, all free, eh? The flights. They're my dependents. So I got myself re-hired. Pull strings because I was working for the Japan office. So when I got out, I was GS-13 engineer. And the reason I got out was GS-14, my boss---he was two or three months younger than me, he wasn't going to retire (chuckles) so I said, I going retire early. And I retired. But then, I knew the people in Japan, so instead of going back to engineering, the only opening was in construction, so I took the construction job. But since I was in retirement, I was getting retirement money, they couldn't pay me regular money. So they gave me the rating, but they paid me what the rating would have given me minus what I was getting as retirement. So I ended up getting GS-2, 3, clerical kind [of] position pay. But I had housing. I took my two children over and then I can go to the PX and the commissary and buy things and give my two kids things that would---if they cannot live on the local economy. Because they not used to Japan style of living. But my oldest boy, he really got lots out of that. He got his black belt and he got what is known as *shugyō*. When you go to apprentice for Japanese *sensei*, you start from the bottom. You do

the laundry, you do the cooking, you do everything. He was living with about three *senseis* in a apartment in Shinjuku. So he really got the training there. But before he got to there, I left him with this Fujima *sensei*, that I had made good friend, he's a dancing teacher, you know. And he was the one finally, got my son and his bride to be together. So all those things happened because we went there.

WN: So then you retired in '73 then, actually.

ES: Yeah.

WN: Right. Then you went back to Japan in '73.

ES: Yeah. And then came back '75 because my wife got sick. I supposed to stay until '76, but I came back in '75. And then she died six months later. So, that was the whole postwar existence. But in the meantime, after the Korean War, construction really phased down in Japan and Korea, Okinawa. So, the forces pulled back. Even the engineering forces, the engineers and everybody came back and they formed a division office here. So, Korea became a district and Japan became a district. And Honolulu had a district, but also to supervise these three districts, they established in Honolulu, the Pacific Ocean Division. And I was part of the Pacific Ocean Division, actually, if I had stuck on and all that, but I had left. Then when I went to Japan, I retired from the district office, USED—U.S. Army Engineer District—Far East, you know in Japan.

WN: USAED.

ES: Yeah.

WN: I see. Okay so, you know, you spent a lot of years with the engineers.

ES: Oh yeah, practically my life.

WN: So what I want to do now is sort of shift gears and have you talk about your hobby of stamp collecting. And if you could tell me how you got started and then your activities during the war and then the postwar.

ES: I think I gave you one. . . .

WN: Yeah, a lot of this stuff is documented.

ES: Yeah, I think I gave you something. Anyway, I was living Downtown, all by myself, because my parents were out. My mother was working as a maid. So YMCA was my best place to go. And of course we don't subscribe to newspapers, so I go there and read. And then, I saw on Sundays, they used to have a special pen pal columns and stamp and cover collecting. I was more interested in pen pal, you know, writing things. And I corresponded mostly with Mainland, some with Japan, but my Japanese not that good, so. (Chuckles) Then, I stayed Nu'uuanu YMCA, went through the Hi-Y, I was one class ahead of my friends, because I told you how my schooling got all fouled up. But I stayed with them and then we formed the Young Men's Division. After Hi-Y, they didn't have any higher division, you know. But we pioneered the Young Men's Division over there and formed lot of different clubs. And my club was called Torii-kai.

WN: Torii-kai?

ES: Yeah, you know that *torii mon* eh? That was our symbol. So every time we hold that, we made one *torii* for the entrance. Made of flowers and you know, benefit dance, like that. And of course, when I used to come home, I had nothing to do too much and so I was collecting stamps and covers too. You know, from pen pal you jump into that kind of line. Because your pen pals happen to be collecting and then they pass your name around. And those guys, they want me to send them Hawaiian stamps. And the postcards. Postcards I used to send 'em. But Hawai'i stamps, out of the question because costs too much. We used to have the old Hawai'i stamps but they were expensive. And it was not used. The Hawaiians under their own sovereignty had Hawaiian stamps.

WN: Oh, you talking about the old. . . .

ES: Yeah. See, I cannot. . . . So the other kind is U.S. postage, that's easy, but an American is not going to tell me go send him American postage, eh? So I used to write to Australia like that too. And then when you go into stamps, you get interested in what they call first-day covers. When the stamp comes out, there's a first day of cancellation. So I start gradually collecting that. Another one to collect was naval covers. You know the navy ships, when they cancel, they used to have "USS *Arizona*" like that, on the cancellation. And everybody was collecting those things.

My immediate supervisor at Punahou School was a longtime collector. So he really got me going. So I used to buy extras from him and whatnot. And then, when the war broke out, I didn't think of covers because we were really restricted. Blackout, you know, you can't go out. My wife was in the hospital. I can't even visit her. So, what you going to do? You stay home, you put a dark screen right around the window, so light won't go out. All you can do is listen to the radio, read. So I started to think of making covers. And that's when . . .

WN: What is a cover? Describe to me what a cover is.

ES: A cover is an envelope with certain stamp and certain cachet—cachet is the picture—commemorating the event. [ES shows WN a cover.] And this was my first cover. The first anniversary of Pearl Harbor.

WN: First anniversary of Pearl Harbor, okay.

ES: And the name Cuevas is in here. He's the one that used to make all kind of sketches, you know, in the drafting room. He's a jolly guy, George Cuevas. And he used to . . .

WN: December 7, 1942 then.

ES: That's the first anniversary, yeah.

WN: So George Cuevas was a draftsman. So he designed the design on the envelope?

ES: Not on the envelope, he sketched it out. And then I refined it on a much larger basis, being a draftsman, I improved on it. And then, brought it down to the printers and they would photographically reduce it to this size.

WN: To fit on the envelope.

ES: Yeah.

WN: I see.

ES: And he furnished the envelope too. 'Cause fortunately, the fellow I went to see, *Nippu Jiji*, which is now *Hawai'i Times*, Mr. Furukawa was the printing manager.

WN: Furikawa?

ES: Furukawa. I think Kiyoshi Furukawa. And I used to see some of his work, because when the Japanese training ship used to come down or when Japan used to have certain stamps or when the American ships come down, the navy collectors used to have special covers for that occasion. And *Nippu Jiji* used to print 'em for them. So he became a collector and when I went to see him, was duck soup for me, because he knew more than I did. And the reason I went there was because my mother's cousin's son-in-law was the photographer there. And the poor guy, he had education in Japan, so he got interned in Tule Lake. A lot of those people [got interned during World War II]. Those days, they concentrated on [Japanese-language] schoolteachers and *bon-san* like that, too. And then influential people in the community. But Mr. Furukawa was just the printing manager, I guess. And they had to keep the bilingual paper alive, otherwise the Japanese not going to know what's going on. I think you've heard of Mr. Makino, yeah?

WN: [Fred] Kinzaburo Makino?

ES: Yeah, Fred Makino. And Mr. Soga.

WN: Yasutaro.

ES: Yasutaro, yeah. Ordinarily, I think the two would be interned. But they were too precious. Nobody to take their place, so they were kept, I think. At least Mr. Furukawa was and he helped me with all this. All the December 7, '43, December 7, '44, it's all George Cuevas' design. And then December 7, '45, the war ended already, he had gone back [to the Mainland], so I had to make my own. (Laughs)

WN: So you would get the design, put it on an envelope, get a stamp—the first . . .

ES: Yeah, whatever stamp. And then I get the cancellation on that day.

WN: So you go to the post office and get it canceled. I see.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: So this Mr. Cuevas, he left after the war ended then and so you had to do your own.

- ES: And this [1944] was considered one of the best designs concerning December 7, you know, nationally. In fact, I got write-up by from a professor at New York University. He said he considered this the most outstanding patriotic cover of the war. I explained we were winning and we were going towards Japan already. And using the Japan flag.
- WN: With the grim reaper.
- ES: Yeah. Grim reaper, and called it "sunset and shadows." That guy [Cuevas] get really good ideas, you know. And this was his last. And then the next one I didn't know what to do, so I came up with---when we used to buy war bonds during those days, they used to stamp 'em---so this is victory loan stamp.
- WN: Which is the one that you got questioned by the [army] intelligence [for]? The 442nd [Regimental Combat Team] one?
- ES: Ah, I think it is. They won't tell me, see. But, even before the war, the questioning, I don't know which one they question me on, they wouldn't tell me. But later on when I was trying to send this 442nd one, so that they can send it [back]---you know, I didn't have this part here, see. I just had this much and I wanted them [442nd men] to write their name and where they staying and what outfit. And then get free mail or whatever come back. Then I have a collection, see. But they [army intelligence] didn't want me to mail too much of this because the picture [i.e., 442nd logo] is over here, you know. To me, it was minor stuff. But they said, "No, don't send that kind over."
- WN: Go for broke, a picture of the 442nd.
- ES: Yeah. This part here. Gives the 442nd combat team. And I guess they could tell it's Oriental faces and whatnot. So, the censors didn't want me to ship 'em, send over to my friends in Italy. I used to write to them and they would mail it back to me. All kind of covers. Like this here, mailed back to me by Arthur Komori. He used to mail back to me this kind because he didn't have stationery, so he used to use this and I used to send plenty of this in the early time. But, this one I think was the one got me in trouble. But before that, plenty guys in the military used to write to me from the front, that used to be my pen pals. Or cover collectors club member. They went forward and they get nothing to do, so I used to keep their address and I used to send 'em to them.
- WN: Send them what?
- ES: Covers. Every time I sponsor, I used to send 'em. But other collectors, civilian collectors in the United States, I used to charge them. Ten cents or whatever. Was really cheap.
- WN: Because they wanted Hawai'i on it and everything.
- ES: Yeah. I was the only one in Hawai'i that made patriotic covers. On the Mainland they had all kind of what they call cachet makers. You know, making covers---patriotic covers. The patriotic covers became famous during the Civil War. They made all kind of patriotic covers and those things became real valuable. So when World War II started, they started to make patriotic covers. But, the war in Europe was not officially a war until December 8, yeah? So Gimble's and some big stationery department stores, they used to issue envelopes, they used to sell and people used to use, but the real emphasis didn't come until after December 7. So,

we start exchanging all this and get thousands of different covers. My room back there is nothing but shoe boxes and all stacked up. I don't know how many thousands I get.

WN: So when you send a cover, you would put the design on the envelope, go to the post office and they would stamp it and mail it out.

ES: Yeah.

WN: But how would you assure that they would stamp it well? You know, clear.

ES: Well, the post office people know. Enough collectors and philatelic societies go up [to the] postmaster and squawk if we don't get service, eh? And now, it's a big business. You know when they first celebrated the anniversary of Pearl Harbor—fiftieth anniversary. Post office came up with this special cancel. Look at this. December 7, 1991, last year, USS *Arizona* and they show the [USS] *Arizona* Memorial. They made a special cancel and this stamp was part of the ten different stamps they issued in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Pearl Harbor. And then the next four years, they going to issue ten stamps each year, commemorating events that took place during that period. One year period. So for five years, from '41 to '45. So it's a big business. So now, you know what they do? It's really not right, but what they do now is to get the first day cover, you have thirty days to do that. But, soon as the stamp comes out, you have to make whatever design you have, print it, put the stamp on. And if you want ten stamps, ten covers, you put 'em in an envelope and you mail 'em to one specified post office, somewhere in the United States that's authorized with that cancel—"First Day [of Issue] cover." And as long as you mail it in and reach them within that thirty-day period, you'll have the original first day date on.

WN: Yeah? That's not that . . .

ES: That's not legal.

WN: Yeah.

ES: But that's what I mean. It's a business with the post office now.

WN: Yeah, takes sort of the skill out of the whole thing.

ES: Right, right, right. But in my case all those dates that I have, except for this kind, I couldn't get 'em on December 7, '41, but all these are dates that the actual date of happening. When blackout was lifted, I got it "blackout lifted." And this was easy for me because I [went to the] Punahou campus station [post office], see.

WN: May 4, 1944. "Blackout of homes lifted after 879 dark nights. December 7, 1941 to May 4, 1944."

ES: And this was my standard. This one I designed my own. And this is kept blank and I can put all kind inside, see. You know how I don't want to make new design, eh.

WN: You have one for . . .

ES: "Martial law abolished."

WN: "October 24, 1944."

ES: See, October 24, 1944.

WN: And you have pictures of Lieutenant General [Robert] Richardson, Franklin Roosevelt, and Ingram Stainback.

ES: Yeah. They were all involved, you see.

WN: Oh, you got that from the newspaper? Oh.

ES: So Mr. Furukawa, he has these cut, so I prepare this but he furnish me with the cut, so I don't have to go out take picture or go out buy the cuts, eh? So that's big help to me. Even this, when the title was . . .

WN: "Military governor abolished."

ES: Yeah, and in the early days, the war bond stamps used to be big ones, so I used to have that. I used to get navy cancel, too. And the navy censor would put down, it's censored. So I used to go through all. . . . This one here, July 27, 28, 29, I got 'em on the twenty-eighth when Roosevelt came here and met with [General Douglas] MacArthur and [Admiral Chester] Nimitz.

WN: Oh, in 1944, the Waikīkī Conference. How much money you think you spent on your hobby?

ES: Oh, big money. (Laughs) Because as I said, you know how many I printed? I got plenty left over, too. I printed 16,000 covers altogether.

WN: For one?

ES: For the whole work. For the whole five years.

WN: During the war?

ES: Yeah. And then of course, in return my friends would send me. And then others would make their covers and mail it to me. And then later on, just to get rid of them I advertised in the philatelic magazine and I used to sell 'em. And one interesting one, you know, like this one here. I took it out for auction, just to get a feel of the price. You know how much this thing sold for? Twenty-two dollars.

WN: Yeah? One?

ES: One. But I was selling 'em for ten dollars.

WN: You made more money than you spent on this hobby?

ES: No. No. Cannot catch up. At least I left something for, you know, a record. This album, I made it for my grandchildren and all my children. And I had one extra, so I brought it to the McCully Stamps [& Coins], and I told the guy, if I add up all these covers that I've been selling at certain price and then this album and these things, it came up to over \$200, \$300,

you know. He's been selling individual covers for me at auction at his shop, see. So I said, "Why don't you try with the whole album." And then two weeks ago I went to see him, he said he sold 'em for \$310.

WN: Yeah. Wow.

ES: Somebody bought 'em. So, I sent one complete one like this to my friend that initially auctioned my other thing for me. And that auction is going to open in June. So I'm waiting to see how much he can get out of it. 'Cause if he gets a good price, then I can make plenty of these [albums]. You know, I still got left over. Except a lot of 'em, I issued only around ten, like that. That's why you see lot of these photocopies. I don't have the original already.

WN: Okay, well, you know, I guess we're ready to wrap it up. You know, do you have anything you want to say about your life in general?

ES: (Laughs) Well, just this morning I was talking to this [cousin] of mine. She's one of the only blood relatives I got left in Hawai'i, I think. I invited her to my son's wedding. And she said she'd like to come to see the ceremony, but because she get bad tooth like that, she don't want to come to the *kaukau*. So I was making arrangements for her to come to Kalihi Valley. She doesn't know how to come, see. And she doesn't drive, no more car, and the son is away. So she call up and said, "Oh, I *wen* send in the invitation and I said I going attend the ceremony and the *kaukau*" because I told her I going to get somebody in my family to pick her up.

Then my daughter tells me, "Hey, why did you promise her that because you got to be there before the ceremony, you got to go take picture. . . ." And I wasn't going to pick her up myself anyway, I was going to have one of my daughters that live out that side—she lives in Wai'alae Iki see, so one of my daughters living out that side to pick 'em up. So I said, "I don't know which daughter going to pick you up."

So I guess my relative must have had second thoughts. She just called up this morning. She said, "Hey Etsuo-san, I'm sorry but," I think she made it up, but, "my gum is giving me trouble," and then she hinted around that, "your daughters might have to go there early." She cannot come early, so she want to withdraw out. And I was talking to her and she finally said, "You know, this is your last and only boy, Sayama name going to carry on."

And I said, yeah, hopefully. But, you know, I told her, "Take-*chan*, you live Wai'alae Iki with a nice house all paid for. Me, I'm living here with my daughter, so I get no place."

She tell me, "Oh, what's the matter with that condo you had?"

I said, "I gave it to my son."

"And [the house in] Kapahulu?"

I said, "Oh, I gave 'em to my youngest daughter, because other three daughters married and they all got homes." I've never owned a car in my life, you know, and I never had a home of my own.

So my friends in Japan tell me, "What you do with all the money? You work like hell."

And so I said, "Sorry, but I put 'em all in the kids' educations. So I told my cousin, "Well, my friends in Japan tell me, '*Ko ga takara*,' the kids are my treasure, you know."

She tells me, "Yeah, *mukashi*, Japan, the poor farmers, they no more nothing, but they get children, so that's their *takara*, you know, treasure."

I had a poor start in life because all my classmates and friends, they had both parents. And they earn enough and the parents got a house of their own. Like me, I'm just going back and forth all kind of place, no place to live. Because my father died. I've never had a place of my own to live. After I retired, by luck I got that lottery [for the] Kapahulu house. But I didn't know whether I was going to qualify [for financing].

So I told my cousin here this morning, "Maybe I went too far out for my kids, but I think that's what my wife wanted. Yaeko [who died in 1975] really loved children." So when she came out of the hospital and couldn't get children, she used to go to the neighbor and borrow children and bring 'em home, take care. 'Cause she stayed home. She cannot go work. So I think I just carried on what she wanted me to do, so I'm satisfied.

And so she [cousin] said, "Well, you think so much of your children, so I think I'm going to cancel out from the wedding 'cause I don't want you to get into trouble with your children," for picking her up and bringing 'em to the reception and all that. And picture taking.

I told her (chuckles), she should have been a reverend. I said, "You think of all these different angles." She's from Japan. The poor girl, she was match mate. She went to live in---we were in Yamaguchi, she went to live in the husband's place in Hiroshima. The husband go bring home a mistress. They stay in the same house! So she said she walked out. She came to Hawai'i. When you get divorced those days, they don't look good upon you, no matter what the cause. So she came Hawai'i by herself and she owns a nice place in Wai'alae Iki. I said, "You did much better than I did." So, you know, like this [saying], *kodomo no tame ni*.

WN: For the sake of the children.

ES: And the other one that Okinawa [community] used was *okagesama de*. No matter what my problems were, *okagesama de*, everybody help me move my life, good or bad. With their help I made it, and then for my children, *kodomo no tame ni*. I carried on my wife's wishes. I got them all through college. One is a Ph.D. Two of 'em I think got master's. So I think, thinking over my life, I think I did pretty well. I didn't come out to be a name, personality in the Japanese community or our community, but I think I did my share. For my family anyway.

WN: That's a good place to end.

ES: Yeah.

WN: Thank you very much.

ES: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW

AN ERA OF CHANGE

Oral Histories of Civilians in World War II Hawai'i

Volume I

**Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

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